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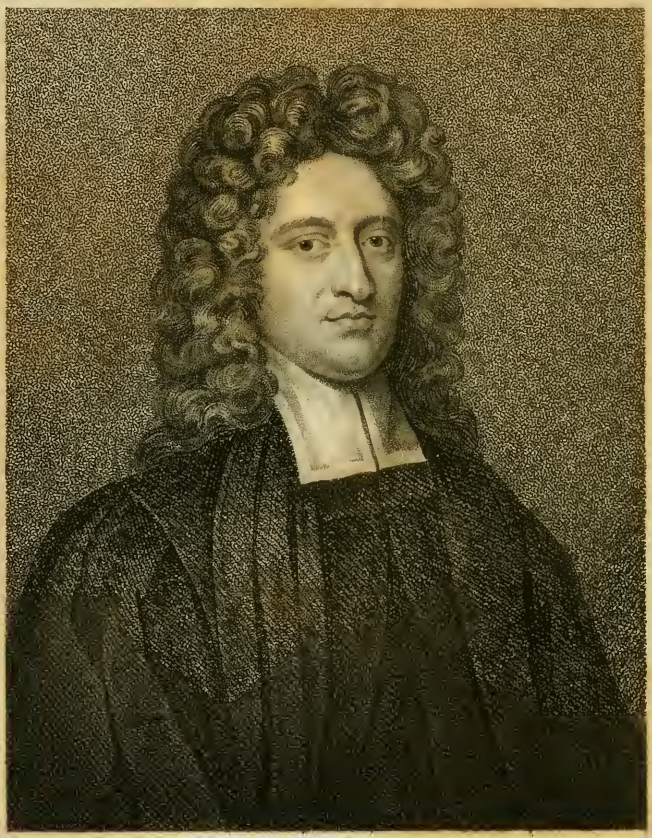

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Revd. John Howe M.A.

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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN HOWE, M. A.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

I. THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION OVER THE INVISIBLE WORLD.
II. THE LIVING TEMPLE.
III. SELF-DEDICATION.
IV. TWO SERMONS ON YIELDING OURSELVES TO GOD, FROM ROM. 6. 13.

EDITED BY THE

REV. JOHN HUNT, OF CHICHESTER.

London:

PUBLISHED BY

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1822

B. Bensley, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

IT must be acknowledged, by every impartial observer, that the present times are distinguished by many signs favourable to the interests of genuine Christianity. Of these, an unprecedented demand for the works of our most eminent divines cannot be viewed as the least considerable. It is an evidence that the Master of the house is not forgotten, when there is an eagerness to converse with those of his servants who were most eminently devoted to his honour, "who being dead yet speak: the end of whose conversation is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." These are they who once shone as lights in the world, whose writings still shed a light on the path of immortality, and whose memories shall diffuse a fragrance to generations yet unborn. And when their works are closely studied, may we not expect that their successors in office will imbibe their spirit, emulate their zeal, and, by a close imitation of their holy example, perpetuate their excellencies in "living epistles" to the latest posterity? It is thus that the cause of God and truth, which they so ably defended, and for which many of them not only preached and wrote, but suffered and died, will be maintained with accumulated strength, and by the accession of new friends from age to age, continue to exert its

energies until the foundations of the spiritual temple are commensurate with the boundaries of the world; and the sacred edifice which is composed of "lively stones" shall be completed, and the "Head-stone thereof brought forth with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it."

These considerations render it a pleasant reflection to the Editor, that he has been led by a variety of incidents to republish the works of the Rev. John Howe. Could he flatter himself that the work will be executed in a manner worthy of him whose name it bears, it would give him the confidence of a more than ample reward, in the thanks and patronage of the religious Public.

For him to offer a eulogy on a name already so justly celebrated, and of which so much has been written by men of the first eminence in the church of Christ, would not only be superfluous, but arrogant. To say any thing of the manner in which the present edition of his works is executed, would be to anticipate the judgment which every reader loves to form for himself. At first it was intended only to publish a volume of manuscripts, part of which was communicated by a friend, and part obtained through the favour of the trustees of a public depository* in which they are still preserved, and where the Editor was kindly permitted to transcribe them. But a uniform edition of his whole works having never been printed, and the folio edition (which contains not more than two-thirds of his works already published) being so scarce that it is difficult to obtain a copy, and that only at a price adequate to the purchase of the whole in the present edition, the Editor yielded to the soli-

*Dr. Williams's Library.

citations of many of his brethren in the ministry, and commenced the present publication. The first volume he wishes to be considered as a specimen of the whole; and pledges himself to pay every attention to preserve the paper and type equally good. He has suffered himself to take no liberties with the style of his Author, it being his wish to preserve the mental productions of Howe in his own language, and to present this great man to the world in the literary costume of his own age. His style has been charged with obscurity. This charge, the Editor conceives, is not well founded. That it does not always flow easily must be admitted: but perhaps this applies chiefly to "The Living Temple," the most metaphysical of his pieces, and in which some degree of harshness of style may be attributed to the nature of the subject. Where this could be removed by transposing a word, or member of a sentence, or by supplying an ellipsis, which is frequently the case, the Editor considered himself not only warranted, but bound to do it, as a service due both to the Author and the Public. But when the sublimity of Mr. Howe's mind, the brilliancy of his thoughts, the conclusiveness of his reasoning, and the force of his language, are considered, that man is not to be envied, who cannot read his works with delight; and if no pleasure be excited, it discovers neither a very comprehensive nor highly cultivated mind.

Let the young minister who wishes to catch the true spirit of his office, and to cultivate that style of preaching which is the most calculated to honour God and do good to immortal souls, read, and read again, the sermons of Howe, (especially those on reconciliation and on yielding ourselves to God,) and is it possible he can fail to attain the desired object?

It has not been judged necessary to adhere closely to the order observed in the folio edition. It will be one object to make each volume contain nearly the same number of pages; but the arrangement will be regulated chiefly by the nature of the subjects. Except this, the only alteration which the Editor has made, he is convinced the Public will consider an advantage. This is in the mode of distinguishing the different subjects discussed in the several treatises. These are marked by the same figures in the head of contents of each chapter, by which they are distinguished in the body of the work. This will afford facility to the reader, and prevent that confusion which must have arisen from a want of greater attention to this subject in the former editions. The Life of the Author, with an Index to the whole, and a List of Subscribers, will accompany the last volume. A Portrait will be given in the course of the publication. No pains nor expense will be spared to secure respectability to the execution of the work, and to render it still worthy of the high place it has long held in the library of the practical Christian, and of the theological student.

Titchfield,
September, 19, 1810.

JOHN HUNT.

MEMOIR.

He who attempts to prefix, to such a mass of fine thought as this Edition of Howe's Works presents, a Memoir of the author, must labour under the enfeebling impression of being sure to disappoint the expectation which the volumes will excite. It is, however, consoling to reflect, that none who combine piety with intellect can rise without pleasure and improvement from the perusal of a life which presents the loftiest results of profound study, though in the most stormy period of our history; while the political connections into which our Divine was drawn by the force of events, left his character untainted even by the suspicion of earthly aims; so that his religion shines with the unusual lustre acquired by a successful struggle against the pride of intellect and the ambition of the world.

Loughborough, in Leicestershire, gave birth to Mr. Howe on the 17th of May, 1630. His father, who was a man of great piety, was the parochial minister of the town, and his mother was distin-

guished by talents so superior, that it is probable we owe to her early culture that pre-eminence of mind which the volumes now presented to the public sufficiently attest. Archbishop Laud, who had given to the elder Mr. Howe the living, must have been disappointed in the incumbent; for he proved a non-conformist to those ceremonies which the metropolitan enforced with the zeal of a man who sincerely mistook them for the beauties of holiness. The same hand, therefore, which had committed the flock to his care, drove him from the important post; and while other pastors, deprived, for similar causes, of opportunities for serving the Redeemer in their native land, obeyed his command by fleeing to Holland and America, the subject of this memoir was taken by his father to Ireland.

Though it does not appear in what part of the sister island the family took refuge, we are informed that while there they were in danger of having their blood mingled with that of the Protestants, which flowed so profusely wherever the arms of the Catholics were triumphant. But as the rebels were compelled to raise the siege of the place, our author was spared to the church and the world. Finding therefore that the civil war, which raged so furiously there, made Ireland unfit to afford them an asylum, the family crossed the Channel to Lancaster.

In this town Mr. Howe laid the foundations of that education which he afterwards raised to heights so noble. With regret we acknowledge our inability to record the name of the tutor, or to point

out the seminary that claims the honour of a pupil whom all would be proud to own.

His early proficiency is attested by his having been at Cambridge, taken a degree, and removed to Oxford by the time he was eighteen years of age. He first entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he had the happiness to meet with scholars so distinguished as Dr. Henry More, and Dr. Cudworth, author of *The Intellectual System*. Becoming a great admirer of these associates of his early studies, he maintained a close friendship with Dr. More, till death removed him from the world; and to this friendship has been ascribed that tinge of Platonism which is observable in the more laboured productions of Mr. Howe.

Having graduated at Cambridge as Bachelor of Arts, he removed to Brazen Nose College, Oxford. Wood informs us, that he was Bible Clerk there in Michaelmas Term 1648. In the following year he took, according to a common practice, the same degree in his new college, to which he had already been admitted at Cambridge. * The diligence and success with which he pursued his studies, together with the excellence of his character, procured his election to a fellowship in Magdalen College. By the Parliament visitors he was made Demy, which Wood seems to mention as a reflection on him; but to those who have marked the honourable integrity which distinguished Howe's conduct through the

* Wood's Fasti Oxonienses, Vol. II. 750. Bachelors of Arts, 1749. Jan. 18, Howe, John, Brazen Nose College.

whole of life, something more will be required to blemish his character than mere insinuation. It would be difficult to find a person less likely to *worm* himself into another man's place, than the subject of this memoir.

Howe, formed for friendship, found here, as at Cambridge, men worthy to claim the honour of being his friends. Some of them were kindred spirits, not merely as scholars, but also as Christian ministers, who afterwards shared with him the weight of the cross which non-conformity was called to bear. Distinct mention is due to Theophilus Gale; Thomas Danson, Chaplain of Christ Church, and afterwards fellow of Magdalen, who became at length pastor of a dissenting church at Abingdon in Berkshire; and to Samuel Blower, who, Calamy says, died pastor of a congregation of dissenters in the same town. This latter was fond of expressing his attachment to Mr. Howe, observing, whenever the name was mentioned in company, "We two were born in the same town, went to the same school, and were of the same College in the University." To these companions of Mr. Howe's academic walks should be added, John Spilsbury, who was afterwards ejected for non-conformity from Bromsgrove in Worcestershire; with whom the author of *The Living Temple* maintained a correspondence at once intimate and endeared, until death separated for a while these bosom friends.

The author of *The Non-conformists' Memorial* mentions also, that besides two of the former per-

sons, Wood neglects to notice in his *Fasti* two others who were graduates while Howe was at Cambridge, George Porter and James Ashhurst, who died at Newington Green, near London. These omissions have been supposed to be designed attempts to diminish the apparent number of those who sacrificed their interest to their sincere disapprobation of the established church.

The President of Magdalen College, at the time that Howe held his fellowship there, was Dr. Thomas Goodwin, whose well known principles might induce an expectation that this fellow would have found himself at home in the church which the President had formed from the pious students of the College. But though it appears that Howe had already adopted those independent principles on which the church was formed, he did not offer himself to become one of its members. When Dr. Goodwin expressed to him in private his disappointment at being deprived of the fellowship of one whom he should have deemed so well fitted and disposed to join their church, Mr. Howe informed him, that a report concerning some peculiarities, on which they were said to lay too much stress, had induced him to keep silence on that subject. He assured the Doctor, that while he had no fondness for these things himself, he was not disposed to quarrel with those who had, but should be happy to join their society, provided they would admit him on catholic principles. That Dr. Goodwin has been unjustly condemned as a bigot to the

most rigid independency is manifest, from the cordial manner in which he now embraced Mr. Howe, and the assurance he gave him, that he should not only himself welcome this new member on these liberal terms, but could also pledge himself for the satisfaction it would afford to the rest of the church. What these peculiarities were, which kept such a man as Mr. Howe from joining the religious society which in other respects he most approved, we are not told; but they afford an opportunity of displaying the wisdom and dignity of that mind which, while it become a convert to a rising sect, guarded itself against the danger of losing its catholic charity towards other Christians; and of eliciting a truth honourable to the society, that they knew how practically to distinguish between regulations edifying to themselves, and terms of communion to be imposed on the consciences of others.

Mr. Howe now acquired that well-earned reputation, both in his own College and through the whole University, which is known by its operating as a stimulus to increased exertion. Previously to July 1652, when he took the degree of M.A. in his 22d year, he had gone through a course of philosophy, conversed closely with the heathen moralists— read over the accounts we have remaining of Pagan theology, the writings of the schoolmen, and several systems and common-places of the Reformers, and the divines that succeeded them. He also informed a person, who told it to Dr. Calamy, that he had at that time gone through a course of study of the

scriptures, from which he had drawn up for himself a body of theology that he afterwards saw very little occasion to alter, in order to adapt it to the systems of other divines.

The instructive and original glosses which Howe often throws on the Scriptures, and indeed the air of originality and independent thinking, combined with profound deference for inspired authority, which pervades the Theological Lectures that form the volumes of this edition, furnish the highest eulogium on this mode of study.

It is probable that Mr. Howe's family continued in Lancashire till this time, for as soon as he had taken his last degree, he went into that county, and was ordained by Mr. Charles Herle in the parochial edifice of Winwick, which is pronounced, by Wood, one of the richest churches in England. Mr. Herle, whose reputation was so great, that he was on the death of Dr. Twisse chosen prolocutor of the Westminster assembly of divines, had several chapelries under his, and, as the minister of these, officiated at Mr. Howe's ordination. The latter used often to say that few in modern times had so primitive an ordination as himself; believing that Mr. Herle was a scriptural bishop, and that in the concurrence of those ministers who assisted him there was the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery of which the apostle speaks.*

Divine Providence now unexpectedly removed Mr. Howe to the opposite extremity of the kingdom, by

* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

calling him to Great Torrington in Devonshire. This is pronounced, by a competent judge of such matters, a donative or curacy belonging to Christ Church Oxford, but equal to one held by institution. From Torrington, Mr. Theophilus Powel was ejected in 1646, when, Dr. Walker says, "he was succeeded by the famous independent, Mr. Lewis Stukely," who, removing to Exeter, where he gathered an independent church that worshipped in the Cathedral, created the vacancy which Mr. Howe was called to fill.

He entered upon the full exercise of his ministry with that ardour and ability which had characterized his preparatory studies, and soon reaped the fruits of his diligence in the sight of a flourishing charge. Several of the congregation had been in the habit of celebrating the Lord's Supper, as members of a church at Biddeford, of which Mr. William Bartlett, a particular college friend of Mr. Howe, was pastor. Whether this arose from dissatisfaction with Mr. Stukely, or from the strength of a prior attachment to Mr. Bartlett, it gave way to the high regard they entertained for Mr. Howe, to whose care their former pastor gladly resigned this portion of his flock.

To those who have become at all acquainted with Mr. Howe's spirit, it is unnecessary to say that, far from drawing around him a little circle and limiting his labours or affections to the people of his immediate charge, he formed connexions of friendship and usefulness through all the county,

where he soon attracted general esteem. Among the ministers of Devon, universal suffrage directed him to Mr. George Hughes, of Plymouth, as a man of pre-eminent worth; and the reception which Mr. Howe found in this family led to his marriage with Mr. Hughes's daughter, March 1, 1654. From subsequent occurrences in this Memoir, it will appear that the match was as propitious as the pious connexion in which it originated might lead us to expect.

The father and son-in-law maintained a weekly correspondence by letters written in Latin, the strain of which may in some measure be guessed by a passage which occurred in one of them: "Sit ros cœli super habitaculum vestrum," "May the dew of heaven fall on your dwelling:" which has been brought into notice, because on that very morning on which it was received from Plymouth, a fire that threatened to consume Mr. Howe's residence was extinguished by mean of a violent rain.

But the comfortable connexion which Mr. Howe had now formed, both with the church to which he ministered and the family to which he was united, was destined to be disturbed by an event that changed the whole colour of his future life. Having occasion to go to London, he was detained there longer than he intended, and going one Lord's day to the chapel at Whitehall, his strikingly prepossessing countenance attracted the perspicacious eye of Cromwell, who was then Protector. Calamy says, that Cromwell knew by the garb that this was a country minister, though it does not appear by

what garb a rural pastor was known in those days. The Protector having sent a person to request an interview after the public worship was closed, desired Mr. Howe to preach before him on the following Lord's day. To Mr. Howe's expressions of surprise and assurances that he was utterly unprepared, Cromwell replied, that it was vain to frame excuses, for he would take no denial. Mr. Howe pleaded, that having dispatched the business for which he came to town, he was now going home, and could not be detained without inconvenience. What great inconvenience would result from the delay, said Cromwell? My people, replied Howe, are very kind to me, and they would think I slighted them and undervalued their esteem, if I delayed to return to them. To obviate this difficulty the Protector promised to write to them himself, and to send a person down to supply their pastor's place. Mr. Howe's first sermon induced Cromwell to press for a second and a third; till at length, after much free conversation, he whose word was like that of a king, armed with power, told the country pastor that he must stay and be domestic chaplain at the seat of government. Mr. Howe's reluctance availed nothing, for a successor, with whom Cromwell pledged himself to satisfy the congregation, was sent to Torrington; and Mrs. Howe, with the rest of the family, were brought to Whitehall, where several of Mr. Howe's children were born.

These most critical moments of Mr. Howe's life served only to elicit his superior worth; he dis-

played that happy combination of prudence with integrity, which proved that while he had not courted this promotion to serve his own interests, he was awake to the opportunities which Providence had thus afforded him, of promoting the welfare of his country, the church, and the world. His reputation as a preacher did honour to the discernment which placed him in this conspicuous post. He was chosen Lecturer of St. Margaret's, Westminster; and the tone of simple dignity which prevailed in his discourses, together with their freedom from every thing that might be branded as the cant of a party, would, as far as Mr. Howe's influence could extend, contradict the charges that have been brought against the preaching most in vogue in those times.

He has, indeed, escaped censure from those who have proved themselves greedy of every opportunity to charge all that were placed in his circumstances, with political manœuvring, or eagerness to found their fortunes upon the ruins of other men. To those who were known to differ from him both in religion and politics, he was studious to do good offices; and whatever hostility was meditated by others against learning or sobriety in religion, in Mr. Howe it found a determined opponent. He attempted to procure for Dr. Seth Ward, afterwards bishop of Exeter, the principalship of Jesus College Oxford; and so earnest was his recommendation, that the Protector, who had already promised that situation, asked the Doctor in a pleasant way, what he thought it worth; and receiving the answer, promised to

allow him that annual sum. On another occasion, Dr. Thomas Fuller, being called to appear before those who, from their appointment to investigate the qualifications of ministers, were called the Triers, was much alarmed, and applied to Mr. Howe in his usual style, saying "You may observe, Sir, that I am a pretty corpulent man, and I have to go through a passage that is very strait; be so kind then as to give me a shove and help me through." If we may judge of the kind of advice which Mr. Howe gave, from the event, it was highly honourable to all parties; for when the Triers asked the usual question, "Have you ever experienced a work of grace on your heart?" Fuller replied, "I can appeal to the searcher of hearts that I make conscience of my very thoughts." As this was no direct answer to the question, while it entered most deeply into the genuine character of the man, it shews that Mr. Howe knew the Triers were not anxious to promote the mere shibboleth of a party, and therefore advised Fuller to declare honestly in his own way, what was his religious character in the sight of God. The result was as successful as every pious and liberal mind could wish.

The generous manner in which Mr. Howe used his interest at court, in serving all men of worth who applied to him, met with its due notice from Cromwell, who one day frankly said to him, "Mr. Howe, you have obtained many favours for others, I wonder when the time is to come that you will ask any thing for yourself or your own family."

That Oliver's discernment should lead him to repose great confidence in one of so much disinterested integrity, can excite no surprise. Many secret services Howe performed, but always with a view to promote the interests of his country, or, which is nearly the same, those of deserving men. When once engaged, he distinguished himself by secresy, diligence and dispatch : of this a particular instance is recorded, in which he travelled with incredible speed to attend a meeting of ministers at Oxford.

But as high places are well denominated in Scripture *slippery places*, it must not be supposed that one of Mr. Howe's independence of thinking and rectitude of action, could always avoid giving offence. He is said to have once preached expressly against Cromwell's notion of particular faith in prayer; and to have created a coolness between himself and the Protector. But so equivocal were the proofs of displeasure, that Mr. Howe held his station at Court till Oliver Cromwell's death, and then was appointed chaplain to Richard, his son and successor.

It was during the short protectorate of Richard that the Independents held their meeting at the Savoy, to draw up their confession of faith. About two hundred pastors and messengers of churches assembled, in October 1658, and, with an unanimity that excited much surprise among those who regarded Independency as an anomalous thing which exhibited the jarring elements of chaos, agreed on that

formulary which they in subsequent days tacitly abandoned for the Assembly's catechism. At this meeting Mr. Howe assisted, along with Dr. Owen, and the other distinguished divines of the independent persuasion.

But the removal of Richard Cromwell from the seat of government occasioned Mr. Howe's return to his rural charge. He laboured among them in peace till some months after the Restoration, when the officious zeal of some persons in behalf of the new order of things occasioned some trouble, even to a man of Mr. Howe's catholicism.

He was informed against by John Evans and William Morgan, for delivering seditious and even treasonable sentiments, in two sermons, on the 30th of September and 14th of October 1660. After an adjournment of the Sessions by the Mayor, in order to accommodate the Deputy Lieutenant of the county, Mr. Howe in open court demanded the benefit of the statutes 1st of Edward VI. and 1st of Elizabeth, to purge himself by more evidences than the informers could produce. Twenty-one respectable persons then cleared Mr. Howe, upon oath, of the accusation, and the Court discharged him. The Mayor, however, was summoned to appear before the Deputy-Lieutenant, and conducted by a party of horse to Exeter, where he was committed to the Marshalsea, and fined several pounds. But when the affair was examined by the Judge, he said the whole was founded in mistake, and dismissed the suit. It was remarked,

that one of the informers soon left the town, and was seen no more; and the other cut his own throat, and was buried in a cross road.

As persecutions of this kind, which were of frequent occurrence in various parts of the kingdom, paved the way for the Act of Uniformity, Mr. Howe, on the celebrated Bartholomew's-day, preached his farewell sermon, in the parochial edifice of Great Torrington. His parting addresses were deeply affecting, and the congregation was dissolved in tears. Dr. Wilkins, who was one of Charles the Second's new bishops, meeting Mr. Howe soon after, expressed his surprise at the effects which the Act of Uniformity had produced; some who seemed most catholic in their principles and spirit, as Mr. Howe certainly was, being most determined non-conformists. Mr. Howe assured him, that his catholicism compelled him to dissent from an establishment which imposed such terms of communion as were now enforced by law. "Besides," said he, "I could not go into a falling house, for fear of its tumbling about my ears; and such I conceive your present ecclesiastical constitution to be, compared with that flourishing state of vital religion which I think I have sufficient warrant from the word of God to expect." The reply of Dr. Wilkins was singularly shrewd, and worthy of remark—"I understand you well; and if that be your mind, take this advice from a friend; don't think to gain any thing by sneaking or crouching, but bear up against us boldly and bravely, stand

to your principles, and sooner or later you may hope to carry your point."

In conformity to the spirit of friendship which he shewed towards Mr. Howe, Wilkins contended with Dr. Cosins against the severity by which the latter attempted to support the establishment. "I am persuaded," said Bishop Wilkins, "though reflected on by many for my moderation, I am a better friend to the church than your Lordship." When his Lordship expressed his surprise at this, Wilkins said, "While you, my Lord, are for setting the top on the piqued end, you will not be able to keep it up any longer than you keep whipping; whereas I am for setting the broad end downwards, and thus it will stand of itself."

Mr. Howe being now cast out from consecrated walls, began to consecrate the houses of his friends and acquaintances in the county of Devon, by preaching in them whenever opportunity afforded. But having on one of these occasions spent a few days at the house of a gentleman, on his return home he was informed that there was a citation out against him and the gentleman at whose house he had preached. The next morning, therefore, he took his horse and rode to Exeter; but while he stood at the gate of the inn where he alighted, one of the dignitaries of the establishment, with whom he was well acquainted, seeing him, said, "Mr. Howe, what do you do here?" To which Mr. Howe replied, "Sir, what have I done that I may not be here?"

Mr. Howe then said, that a citation was out against him, and that if he did not take care he should in a short time be apprehended. The dignitary asked him, if he did not intend to go to the Bishop? To which Mr. Howe replied, that he did not intend, unless his Lordship, being informed that he was there, should send for him. The person who thus accidentally met him immediately went to the Bishop, and brought from him a message, that he should be glad to see Mr. Howe. Having received him very politely, his Lordship began to rally him on his non-conformity; but was answered in such a manner, that he soon dropped the subject, and began to assure Mr. Howe, that if he would come in amongst them he might have very considerable preferment. They parted with mutual civility; and as neither party mentioned the process in the ecclesiastical court, so Mr. Howe and his friend heard no more of the affair.

In the year 1665 it was deemed not enough to have silenced the non-conformist ministers for three years, and therefore the infamous Five Mile Act was passed by the Parliament that sat at Oxford. The oath which was intended to bind men to passive obedience and non-resistance, was to be taken by the non-conformist ministers, or they were not allowed to come, unless on a journey, within five miles of any city or corporation, or any place that sent members to Parliament, or any place where they had been ministers, or had preached since the Act of Oblivion. As there was a difference of opi-

nion concerning the meaning of the oath, there was a correspondent diversity of practice; but since the excellent subject of this memoir determined in favour of taking the oath, it may be interesting to our readers to see the notes which he drew up, and which are highly characteristic of the man:

"1. My swearing is my act. 2. The obligation I hereby contract is voluntary. 3. Swearing in a form of words prescribed by another, I adopt those words, and make them my own. 4. Being now so adopted, their first use is to express the true sense of my heart, touching the matter about which I swear. 5. Their next use, as they have now the form of an oath, is to assure him or them who duly require it from me, that what I express is the true sense of my heart. 6. It is repugnant to both those ends, that they should be construed (as now used by me) to signify another thing than what I sincerely intend to make known by them. 7. If the words be of dubious signification, capable of more senses than one, I ought not to hide the sense in which I take them, but declare it, lest I deceive them whom I ought to satisfy. 8. That declaration I ought to make, if I have opportunity, to them whose satisfaction is primarily intended by the oath; if not, to them whom they intrust and employ: this declared sense must be such as the words will fairly bear without force or violence."

It has been asserted, though upon what authority does not appear, that notwithstanding all Mr. Howe's concessions to authority, and all the friends which his former kindnesses had procured him, he was in the year 1665 imprisoned in the isle of St. Nicholas, where his father-in-law, George Hughes, and his brother-in-law, Obadiah Hughes, had been confined for a still longer period. Though Dr. Calamy could not discover the occasion of this imprisonment, or the means of his deliverance, the following letter to

his brother-in-law, after their liberation, renders the fact probable, if not certain:

"Blessed be God that we can have and hear of each other's occasions of thanksgiving; that we may join praises as well as prayers, which I hope is done daily for one another. Nearer approaches and constant adherence to God, with the improvement of our interest in each other's hearts, must compensate (and will, I hope, abundantly) the unkindness and instability of a surly, treacherous world, that we see still retains its wayward temper, and grows more peevish as it grows older, and more ingenious in inventing ways to torment whom it disaffects. It was, it seems, not enough to kill by one single death; but when that was almost done, to give leave and time to respire, to live again, at least in hope, that it might have the renewed pleasure of putting us to a farther pain and torture in dying once more. Spite is natural to her; all her kindness is an artificial disguise—a device to promote and serve the design of the former, with the more efficacious and piercing malignity: but patience will elude the design, and blunt its sharpest edge. It is perfectly defeated, when nothing is expected from it but mischief, for then the worst it can threaten finds us provided; and the best it can promise, incredulous, and not apt to be imposed upon. This will make it at last despair, and grow hopeless, when it finds that the more it goes about to mock and vex us, the more it teaches and instructs us; and that as it is wickeder, we are wiser. If we cannot, God will outwit it, and carry us, I trust, through to a better world, upon which we may terminate hopes that will never make us ashamed."

While Mr. Howe was thus, like David, shifting from place to place, in order to evade an unreasonable and restless foe, he was induced to publish one of those valuable works which have turned the sufferings of the non-conformists into the most efficient means of perpetuating their cause. He had, indeed, already inserted in the Morning Exercises, a sermon

on "Man's creation in a holy but mutable state;" but the Treatise which he now gave to the public, entitled, the "Blessedness of the Righteous," was of a more important character, though it is said to have been the substance of a course of sermons delivered to his charge at Torrington. Had we no other means of forming a judgment concerning his style of preaching, we should, from this Treatise, pronounce it far too much laboured. But his posthumous discourses, which were taken down from his lips, are as luminous and idiomatic and free as we could wish them, and thus prove that the involved style of his larger treatises arose from excessive solicitude to render them worthy of the eye of the public, and of the learned. The preface to the Blessedness of the Righteous has been, with great justice, quoted as a fine specimen of sublimity of thought and catholicism of spirit; forming a porch in perfect harmony with a temple reared to the honour of the God who will crown the righteous with that bliss which arises from a transforming view of his own glorious character.

Mr. Howe was now reduced to great straits; for his family was increased, and he had been for some years without any sphere of labour from whence he could derive an income. But that God whom he faithfully served, and to whose approbation he had sacrificed his prospects of worldly gain, opened to him a source of relief by a liberal invitation from a person of rank in Ireland. He set off for Dublin, in the beginning of April 1671; but, on

the way, met with an occurrence very characteristic both of the man and of his times. In company with his eldest son, and a considerable number of friends, he was detained by contrary winds, at the port where he intended to embark, supposed to be Holyhead. In a large parochial edifice they found that prayers, without any sermon, were expected on the Lord's-day; and therefore they went in quest of some retired spot on the sea-shore, where Mr. Howe might comply with the request of the party by preaching to them. But as they were walking along the sands, they met two persons riding towards the town; and on one of the company addressing a question to the inferior of the two equestrians, he proved to be the parish clerk, who informed them that the other, who was the parson, never preached, but would be willing to lend his pulpit to a stranger. Upon application, this proved to be correct, and Mr. Howe, turning back with his party, preached twice to an auditory, which, in the afternoon, was very large and deeply impressed.

But, on the following Lord's-day, this created great embarrassment to the incumbent. For the inhabitants, not only of the town, but also of the adjacent country, observing that the wind had not changed, and that neither the vessel nor the strange minister were gone, came flocking into town in great numbers, hoping to hear Mr. Howe again. The parson, seeing a prodigious crowd, aware of their expectation, and having made no provision for preaching, either by himself or any other, was in

such consternation that he sent his clerk to Mr. Howe, entreating that he would come and preach again to the immense multitude, who were in eager expectation. The messenger found Mr. Howe so indisposed that he was in bed, and in such a state that it was doubtful whether he ought to comply with the request. But, reflecting that the voice of God seemed to call him out to an enlarged sphere of usefulness, where a starving flock eagerly looked for the word of life, he resolved to venture. Rising from his bed, he went as quickly as possible into the crowded congregation, where he preached, with great freedom and energy, to a people who seemed so much affected, that Mr. Howe used to say, "If my ministry was ever of any use, I think it must be then." Soon after, the vessel sailed, and Mr. Howe felt no ill effects from this effort to promote the welfare of others at his own risk.

In Ireland, he lived as chaplain to Lord Massarene, in Antrim, and enjoyed that respect which was so much his due. The Bishop of the diocese, together with the Metropolitan, demanding no declaration of conformity, gave him leave to preach, every Lord's-day afternoon, in the parochial pulpit of the town. Calamy says, he was informed that the Archbishop, in a meeting of the Clergy, declared, that he wished every pulpit over which he had any controul to be open to Mr. Howe.

During the first year of his residence in Ireland, Mr. Howe published his most eloquent discourse on the text "Remember how short my time is; where-

fore hast thou made all men in vain?" It was preached on an affecting occasion. Anthony Upton, esq. son of a kinsman of Mr. Howe, who lived at Lupton, in Devon, having resided between twenty and thirty years in Spain, was at length expected home, by his father and an affectionate family, who were collected from various parts to give him a joyful welcome. But the vessel for which they looked out so eagerly blasted all their hopes, by exhibiting the mourning signals of having on board the corpse of the young man, who had been suddenly snatched off by a violent disease, and whose ashes were now borne to find a grave in his native place. The assembled party, amounting to twenty, and composed of brothers and sisters, with their consorts and children, who had hoped to embrace their relative with joy, were thus called together to shed their tears over his untimely tomb. The preacher, in a strain of sublime pathos, pours the consolations of religion into the bleeding hearts of his relatives, by shewing that it would be unworthy of God to lavish such powers as he has bestowed on man, unless he had designed to perpetuate his being and his bliss beyond the narrow space of this mortal life.

The next publication which Mr. Howe gave to the world was, "A Treatise on Delighting in God." This also was the substance of a course of sermons preached at Torrington, and affords an honourable testimony to the dignified and devotional strain of the pastor's instructions.

In the year 1675, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, a Non-

conformist minister of London, dying, his congregation were divided in their choice of a successor. One part voted for Mr. Charnock, but another sent Mr. Howe an invitation. The solicitude of Mr. Howe to act according to the divine will is attested by his taking a journey to London, in order to judge of circumstances on the spot, and by the following paper, which he wrote previously to setting off.

"Considerations and Communings with myself, concerning my present journey. Dec. 20, 1675, by night on my bed:

I. Quære. Have I not an undue design or self-respect in it?

1. I know well I ought not to have any design for myself, which admits not of subordination to the interest and honour of the Great God and my Redeemer, and which is not actually so subordinated.

2. I understand the fearful evil and sinfulness of having such an undue regard; that it is idolatry, the taking another god, and making myself that god.

3. I find, through God's mercy, some sensible stirrings of hatred and detestation in my breast of that wickedness, and a great apprehension of the loveliness and beauty of a state of pure, entire devotedness to God in Christ, and of acting accordingly.

4. I have insisted on this chiefly in prayer, in reference to this business, ever since it was set on foot, that I might be sincere in it.

5. I have carefully examined what selfish respects I have in this matter. Is it worldly emolument? In this my heart acquits me in the sight of God. Is it that I affect to be upon a public stage, to be popular and applauded by men? To this I say, 1. That I do verily believe that I shall be lower in the eye and esteem of the people in London, when I come under their nearer interview. I know myself incapable of pleasing their genius. I cannot contrive nor endure to preach with elaborate artifice. They will soon be weary, when they hear nothing but plain discourses of such matters as are not new to them. Yea, and ministers that now judge of me by what I have written, when matter and words were

in some measure weighed, will find me, when I converse with them, slow to apprehend things, slow to express my own apprehensions, unready and entangled in my apprehensions and expressions; so that all will soon say, "This is not the man we took him for." 2. It displeases me not that they should find and say this; I hope I should digest it well. 3. I have found, blessed be God, that the applause some have given me in letters (as I have received many of that strain, very many, long before this business, and that had no relation to any such, that no eye hath ever since seen but my own) an occasion and means to me of deep humiliations, when my own heart witnessed to me my miserable penury, and that I am thought to be what I am not. 4. So far as I can find, I do not deliberately covet or desire esteem but for my work's sake. All the design I can more vehemently suspect myself of, that looks like self-interest in any way, is, 1. The improvement of my own mind, which I know there may be great opportunities for, if this journey should issue in my settlement in London. 2. The disposal of my children. Yet I hope these things are eyed in subordination and indifferently, so as not to sway me against my duty.

II. Have I not a previous resolution of settling at London, before I go up?

1. I have a resolution to do what I shall conceive most to the usefulness of the rest of my life; which resolution I ought never to be without.

2. I am seriously yet at a loss as to judging this case, whether in this country or there.

3. If I can find clearly it is my duty to return, in order to continuance at Antrim, I shall do it with high complacency.

III. Quære. Am I not afraid of miscarrying in this undertaken voyage, by shipwreck? &c.

I find little of that fear, I bless God. To put off this tabernacle so easily, I reckon, would to me be a merciful dispensation, who am more afraid of sharp pains than of death. I think I should joyfully embrace those waves which should land me on an undesigned shore, and when I intended Leverpool, should land me in heaven.

After such a display of purity of motive and solicitude to glorify God in his ministry, Mr. Howe's satisfaction in settling with the congregation that had invited him, and the success of his labours in the metropolis, will not be surprising. King Charles's indulgence at this time afforded Mr. Howe a better opportunity of exercising his ministry than could have been expected; for his congregation was considerable, both in numbers and talents; and he was held in high esteem by several of the dignitaries of the establishment, as well as by his brethren among the dissenting ministers.

That the care of a new charge, and the distractions of London, did not withdraw him from study, may be seen by the publication of the first part of his most elaborate work, "The Living Temple," which came out as soon as Mr. Howe was settled in the metropolis, though it was projected under the hospitable roof of Lord Massarene, to whom it was dedicated. As it was designed to shew that a good man is the temple of God, the author first labours to prove the existence of a Deity, to whom such a temple should be reared.

In the year 1677, Mr. Howe was drawn into controversy by the publication of a letter to the Hon. Robert Boyle, on a difficult point in Theology, "the reconcileableness of God's prescience of the sins of men, with the wisdom and sincerity of his counsels and exhortations." While some highly admired this piece, by others it was as much condemned. Theophilus Gale, his old fellow student, inserted some animadversions on it, in the fourth

part of his "Court of the Gentiles," which appeared about this time. Mr. Howe defended himself against Mr. Gale, in a postscript to his letter. Mr. Danson also wrote against Mr. Howe; though it is said that he was answered, not by Mr. Howe himself, but by a witty and entertaining piece from the pen of Andrew Marvel. This, however, is not to be found among the works of that satirical, but incorruptible patriot.

While the Popish plot, and the Bill of Exclusion, were the grand objects that occupied the public mind, Mr. Howe was much consulted by all parties. At the request of Bishop Lloyd, he went to meet that prelate, at the house of Dr. Tillotson, then Dean of Canterbury. To the enquiry concerning what would satisfy the Dissenters, Mr. Howe said, he conceived the grand thing they wished for was, to be able to promote parochial reformation. "For that reason," said the bishop, "I am for taking the lay Chancellors quite away, as they are the great hindrance to reformation." It was at length agreed that they should have another meeting, the next evening, at seven o'clock, at Dr. Stillingfleet's, the Dean of St. Paul's. Mr. Howe took with him, according to agreement, Dr. Bates; but they found not the company that was expected; and though they waited till ten o'clock, the Bishop neither came, nor took any farther notice of the affair. The next day, they heard that the Bill of Exclusion was thrown out of the House of Lords, by a majority, fourteen of which were bishops.

Dean Stillingfleet at this time made an attack on the Dissenters, which Mr. Howe joined with Dr. Owen, Mr. Baxter, and others, to repel. Tillotson also preached a sermon at Court, in 1680, in which he asserted, that no man is obliged to preach against the religion of a country, though a false one, unless he has the power of working miracles. King Charles, the "most religious king," for whose edification this sermon was preached, happening to be asleep most of the time, a nobleman said to him afterwards, "It is a pity your Majesty slept, for we had the finest piece of Hobbism you ever heard in your life." Ods fish, said the king, he shall print it then; and immediately sent his commands to the preacher. When it came out, the Dean sent it, according to his usual practice, to Mr. Howe, who drew up a letter in reply, which he read to him as they rode in the carriage of the Dean, who was so ashamed of what he had asserted, that he wept and bewailed it bitterly, apologising for himself, however, by saying, that he was suddenly called upon to preach, instead of another person who had been taken ill.

In the years 1681 and the two following, Mr. Howe published several of his minor pieces; and when the noble patriot, William Lord Russel, was beheaded, he addressed to his widow a Letter full of devout consolation. Though it was anonymous, her Ladyship discovered the writer, and sent him her thanks, assuring him that she would endeavour to follow his advice. This epistle is published in the Collection of Lady Russel's Letters, and was fol-

lowed by many tokens of mutual friendship between Mr. Howe and the family of the noble martyr to liberty. It is hoped, says the first biographer of Howe, that the remaining branches of this noble family will adhere to his principles and imitate his glorious example.

As the fire which now raged against Dissenters was furnished with fuel by a Letter from Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, Mr. Howe sent his Lordship a Letter replete with dignified argument and faithful expostulation.

But the voice of reason and religion were too feeble to be heard amidst the clamour of wrath and bitterness that now raged against Non-conformity, and Mr. Howe's opportunities of usefulness were so abridged, that he gladly accepted an invitation from Lord Wharton, to travel with him on the continent. Not having had an opportunity of taking leave of his friends, he wrote a letter to them, as soon as he arrived on the other side of the sea. The following extracts from it will throw light on the history of the writer.

"It added to my trouble, that I could not so much as bid farewell to persons to whom I had so great endearments, which solemnity, you know, our circumstances would not admit. He who knoweth all things, knoweth that I am not designing for myself. I love not this world, nor do I covet an abode in it, upon any other account than doing some service for him and the souls of men. It has, therefore, been my settled sentiment a long time, to desire peace and quiet, with some tolerable health, more than life. Nor have I found any thing more destructive to my health than confinement to a room, a few days, in the city air. The city was more healthful to me formerly, than since the anger

and jealousies of such as I never had a disposition to offend, have occasioned persons of my circumstances very seldom to walk the streets.

"But my hope is, that God will, in his good time, incline the hearts of rulers more to favour us, and that my absence from you will be for no long time; it being my design, in dependence on his gracious providence and pleasure, in whose hands our times are, if I hear of any door open for service with you, to spend the health and strength which God shall vouchsafe me (and which I find through his mercy much improved since I left you,) in his work among you."

He then proceeds to give them such counsels concerning watchfulness over their spirit, that they may not indulge a wish to treat others as they were treated, and such exhortations to all that is benevolent and exalted in religion, that we cannot help exclaiming; And is this the man that "could very seldom walk the streets of London, on account of the anger and jealousies" of some of its ruling inhabitants! "Of him the world was not worthy!"

After visiting other celebrated places, Mr. Howe took up his residence at Utrecht, attracted by the pleasantness of the situation, and by the society which he there enjoyed with Mr. Matthew Mead and other distinguished Englishmen. He took his turn in preaching at the English Church in the city, as did also Dr. Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. This celebrated prelate one day conversing freely on the subject of Non-conformity, told Mr. Howe, I think it cannot subsist long; but when you and Mr. Baxter, and Dr. Bates, and a few more, are laid in your graves, it will sink and come to nothing. Mr. Howe replied, "That must be left to God; but

I reckon it depends not on persons, but on principle. As some pass off the stage, others will rise up, and fill their places, acting upon the same principles; though, I hope, with due moderation towards those of different sentiments."

Several years after, Dr. Calamy was informed by Burnet, at his episcopal palace in Sarum, that he and the dignitaries of the establishment had thought that dissent would have been *res unius ætatis*, but as it was otherwise, he was happy to see the amiable spirit of the new generation of dissenting ministers that was rising up.

While in Holland, Mr. Howe was admitted to interviews with William, who was afterwards seated on the throne of Britain, and who was fond of hearing anecdotes of Cromwell, whom he called Mr. Howe's old master.

The pangs inflicted on Mr. Howe and his little company of refugees, by the news they received of the rapid advances which the English government was making towards Popery and despotism, were, at at length, alleviated by information concerning King James's declaration for liberty of conscience, which encouraged Mr. Howe's congregation to invite his return. Having resolved to comply, he waited on the Stadtholder, who received him kindly, wished him a good voyage, but advised him to resist all proposals for addressing the King by way of sanctioning his dispensing power.

Joyfully received as Mr. Howe was by his flock, he was deeply affected by the critical circumstances

of his country. Frequent meetings were held, to consider what course the dissenting ministers should pursue; when Mr. Howe always declared against any such addresses to the King as the court was earnestly seeking, in order to sanction its schemes. At one meeting, which was held in Mr. Howe's own house, two persons attended from Court, and declared that the King was waiting in his closet, and would not depart till he received their decision. To the proposal made by one minister to gratify his majesty, another replied, that all their previous sufferings were not so much on account of their religious sentiments, as for their determination to maintain the civil privileges of their country, in opposition to tory measures; and if, therefore, the King expected that they should requite his indulgence by abandoning their principles, he had better take their liberty back again. In summing up, Mr. Howe declared that he himself, and the majority, were of this mind; and the report was accordingly carried to the King.

At length the storm which had long shaken the realm subsided into a calm, by the landing of William the Third, and the complete success of his arms. On this occasion Mr. Howe addressed him, in behalf of the dissenting ministers, in the following terms:

"We declare our grateful sense of your Highness's hazardous and heroical expedition, which the favour of heaven has made so surprizingly prosperous.

"We esteem it a common felicity that the worthy Patriots of the nobility and gentry of this kingdom, have unanimously concurred to your Highness's design, by whose most prudent advice

the administration of public affairs is devolved, in this difficult conjuncture, into hands which the nation and the world know to be apt for the greatest undertakings.

"We promise the utmost endeavours which in our station we are capable of affording, for promoting the excellent and most desirable ends for which your highness has declared.

"Our continual and fervent prayers are offered to the Almighty for the preservation of your highness's person, and the success of your future endeavours for the defence and propagation of the Protestant interest throughout the Christian world."

It was now warmly debated whether the Nonconformists should be comprehended within the establishment, by altering the terms of conformity, or should have such indulgences granted as would set them at ease from the penalties they formerly endured. Mr. Howe finding, to his surprise and mortification, that many of the dignitaries of the establishment were hostile to the granting of any favours to his friends, after the court that had been so recently paid to them, when the church was in distress, drew up a piece entitled, "The Case of the Protestant Dissenters represented and argued."

At length the Act of Uniformity gave to the Dissenters a great part of that privilege, which nothing but bigotry and tyranny could ever have denied them. To improve to the utmost this happy event, Mr. Howe published an Address to Conformists and Dissenters, in which the dignity, benevolence, and wisdom of his mind were displayed in all their force.

New contests now called for the interposition of Mr. Howe's peaceful and catholic spirit. The differences among the Dissenters themselves arose from

what may be termed an amiable cause; for the Presbyterians and Independents wishing to act as one body, drew up Heads of agreement assented to by the body of United Ministers, which were published in 1691, a great part of which was from Mr. Howe's pen. But as there was perhaps in this union a greater sacrifice of sentiment than was strictly proper, so one of the first measures of the body was a declaration against Mr. Davis, of Rothwell, whose apostolical zeal demanded not only praise, but imitation; and the final result was, that what was intended for peace proved the firebrand of strife.

The strictest Independents drew off from the United Ministers; and a controversy arising about the publication of Dr. Crisp's works, one party charged the other with verging towards Arminianism, and even Socinianism, and was accused, in its turn, of favouring the Antinomian error.

Mr. Howe, as usual, laboured to promote charity and peace, but almost laboured in vain; for, Mr. Williams being excluded from the Lecture that was held at Pinner's Hall, 1694, another was set up at Salters' Hall, in which Dr. Bates, Mr. Howe, and Mr. Alsop, were united with Mr. Williams.

In the contests that rose, about this time, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, Mr. Howe took a part by the publication of a tract, in 1694, entitled, "A calm and sober enquiry concerning the possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead." In this letter he waves the question about three persons in the Deity, though he pronounces that term neither inde-

fensible nor blameable, and merely enquires whether the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, cannot admit of sufficient distinction from each other to answer the purposes assigned them by the Scriptures, and yet each of them be God, consistently with the unquestionable truth that there can be but one God. This he asserts to be neither a contradiction nor an absurdity. That Mr. Howe failed to reconcile the contending parties, or even to escape the imputation of heresy, will excite no surprise.

Occasional Conformity was the next subject of debate on which Mr. Howe employed his pen. Sir Thomas Abney, who was a member of his flock, going publicly both to his own place of worship and to the parochial place, during the year of his mayoralty, was severely animadverted upon by some, who were jealous of this honour put upon Dissenters, and was defended by his pastor Mr. Howe.

By this time, says Dr. Calamy, when that little charity we had among us, was just expiring, Mr. Howe began to be weary of living. He had seen enough of the world to be convinced how unfit a place it was to continue to dwell in. He wanted to breathe in nobler air and inhabit better regions, and we shall soon see how he fled thither.

His latter publications were chiefly Funeral Sermons, for several of his best friends, the excellent of the earth; and last of all, he gave to the world, in 1705, a Discourse on Patience in expectation of future blessedness, with an Appendix. Of this patience he had now much need; for he was tried by

several complaints; but while he still thought that to serve Christ was worth living for, he shewed that to depart and be with Christ was in his esteem well worth dying for. Sometimes he seemed to be already in heaven. His original biographer says, "that some of his flock to this day remember, that in his last illness, when he had been declining for some time, he was once in a most affecting, melting, heavenly frame, at the Communion, and carried out into such a ravishing and transporting celebration of the love of Christ, that both he himself and they who communicated with him, were apprehensive he would have expired in that service."

In his last sickness he conversed pleasantly with persons of all ranks, who came to see him. Among the rest, Richard Cromwell, to whom he formerly was chaplain, and who had now grown old in retirement from the world, hearing of Mr. Howe's decline, came to pay him a last farewell visit. Many tears were mingled with their serious discourses; and one who was present, gave an affecting account of this solemn parting, between two distinguished men, who had each, though in different ways, acted an important part on the stage of this world.

Having been exceedingly ill, one evening, and finding himself unexpectedly revived, next morning, his friends expressed to Mr. Howe their surprise at finding that he was pleased with this. He replied, that, while he liked to feel himself alive, he was most willing to lay aside this clog, the body. He once observed to his wife, "Though I think I love you as

well as is fit for one creature to love another, yet if it were put to my choice, whether to die this moment, or live through this night, and living this night would secure the continuance of life for seven years longer, I would choose to die this moment." At length on April 2, 1705, he was translated to the blessedness of the righteous, to which he has taught many to aspire.

He was interred at St. Allhallows, Bread Street, and his Funeral Sermon was preached by his fellow-labourer, Mr. Spademan, from 2 Tim. iii. 14.

In answer to enquiries after his papers, his eldest son, Dr. George Howe, said that his father industriously concealed the large memorials which he had collected of his own life and times, and in his last illness ordered them all to be destroyed. Nothing, therefore, was left but some short notes of Sermons, and some Latin Memoranda in the blank pages of his study Bible, of which the following is a translation:

Dec. 26, 1689. After I had long and seriously reflected, that in addition to a full and undoubted assent to the objects of faith, it is necessary to have a lively taste and relish of them, that they may penetrate to the inmost recesses of the heart, with greater power and efficacy, and there being more deeply fixed, may more mightily govern the life; and that there could be no other way of coming to a just conclusion concerning the safety of our state towards God; and after I had been largely discoursing on 2 Cor. i. 12, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience," &c. this very morning I awoke out of a most delightful dream, of this kind: a wonderful stream of celestial rays from the sovereign throne of the Divine Majesty seemed to be poured into my opened, panting breast. Very often have I, from that remarkable day, revolved in my grateful mind, that memorable pledge of the Divine favour, and have tasted over again and again its sweetness.

But the experience I had of the same kind of bliss, on October 22, 1704, through the wonderful kindness of my God, and the most delightful operation of the Holy Spirit, far surpassed all the powers of language I can command. I felt the most delightful melting of heart, attended by profuse tears of joy, that the love of God should be shed abroad in the hearts of men; and that his Spirit should be shed on mine for that blessed end. Rom. v. 5.

To review the life and character of such a man as John Howe, is as arduous as it is edifying and delightful. In him we behold our nature exalted by Divine influence to such heights, that few can follow him closely enough to mark his movements, or measure his form. That he had his faults, we may be sure, not only from what we know of human nature in its best state, but from his own deliberate confession; though it is difficult at this distance of time, to discover them with such distinctness as to show to others how they may avoid the rocks on which he split.

But the excellence which presents itself to view in almost every page of his writings, and in every record of his life, is the devotional spirit. He was evidently of that royal priesthood, whose whole business is religion, and who "whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, do all to the glory of God." He not only exhibited in himself a proof of the position, unfolded in his great work, that a good man is the temple of God, but, viewing the universe as one vast temple to Jehovah's praise, he trod as on sacred ground, and breathed the air of heaven.

After this, it may seem surprising to mention his inflexible integrity. He that lives under the eye of God will, indeed, be just in all his dealings with man;

but few have been placed in circumstances that could put integrity to so severe a test, and fewer still have come out of the fiery ordeal with a reputation so unspotted and exalted. That an angry world could not frown him into cowardly compliance with its will, is the least part of his praise; for he was proof against a far more alarming temptation, that of following those we love, and sacrificing some portion of stern principle to please those who have gained the preference of our heart. But neither the coarse vulgar who prevented him from walking the streets of London, nor the Prince who held the seat of power, could bend the soul of Howe from the straight path of duty; and when he judged that truth or holiness were at stake, he was alike immoveable, whether a dominant hierarchy threatened, or the brethren with whom he had suffered attempted to argue or persuade.

Yet seldom has such independence of thought and action been allied with charity so genuine or benevolence so warm. In him was seen the full import of the expression, which if it had been found in classic, instead of inspired writings, would have been extolled to the skies, "Charity rejoiceth in the truth." Superficial observers of his candid temper supposed that he held his creed with a loose hand; but when the Act of Uniformity put him to the test, the decision with which he sacrificed his gain to his convictions, compelled them to acknowledge with surprise, that what they had mistaken for laxity of sentiment was kindness of heart.

Were we, however, to be called upon to select that which was most characteristic of John Howe, we should without hesitation exhibit his elevation of mind. It is not often that his writings display what would be termed the sublime in composition; but the nobility of his soul raises him above every thing that is little or coarse, and his touch exalts and dignifies common subjects to such a degree, that we feel ourselves rising with him till we wonder that we did not before see the objects of our former acquaintance in the golden light which he pours on every thing he presents to view.

To those who think that some portion of obscurity is essential to the sublime, it may appear an unnecessary deduction from his praise, to mention the injury which he has done to his more finished productions by so crowding his sentences with thought, and inlaying them with parentheses, that it is difficult to grasp or retain their full import. But when repeated perusals have rendered his style familiar, it so fills the mind with mighty and elevated thoughts, that most other writings appear trite or vapid.

The originality of Howe is of that peculiar and superior kind that becomes infectious, and compels the reader, departing from beaten routes, to draw from the Scriptures and the doctrines of theology, reflections that surprise by their novelty, improve by their sanctity, and agitate by their force. But to display all the excellencies of the author or his works would require a volume.

ADDENDA

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ADDENDA TO THE MEMOIR.

Letter to Lady RUSSEL, *on the Execution of Lord* RUSSEL.

MADAM,

IT can avail you nothing, to let your honour know, from what hand this paper comes; and my own design in it is abundantly answered, if what it contains proves useful to you. Your affliction hath been great, unspeakably beyond what it is in my power or design to represent; and your supports (in the paroxysm of your affliction) have been very extraordinary; and such as wherein all that have observed or heard, could not but acknowledge a divine hand.

But your affliction was not limited and enclosed within the limits of one black day, nor is like those more common ones, the sense whereof abates and wears off by time; but is continued, and probably more felt, as time runs on: which therefore makes you need continued help from heaven every day.

Yet there is here a great difference between what expectations we may have of divine assistance, in the beginning or first violence of some great affliction; and in the continued course of it afterwards. At first we are apt to be astonished, a consternation seizes our thinking faculty, especially as to that exercise of it, whereby it should minister to our relief. In this case the merciful God doth more extraordinarily assist such as sincerely trust and resign themselves to him; unto these, as his more peculiar favourites, his sustaining influences are more immediate, and more efficacious, so as even (in the present exigency) to prevent and supersede any endeavour of theirs, whereof they are, then, less capable. And of the largeness and bounty of his goodness, in such a case, few have had greater experience than your ladyship; which was eminently seen, in that magnanimity, that composure and presentness of mind, much admired by your friends, and no doubt by the special favour of heaven afforded you in the needful season: so that while that amazing calamity was approaching, and stood in nearer view, nothing that was fit or wise or great was omitted; nothing indecent done. Which is not now said, God knows, to flatter your ladyship, (whereof the progress will farther vindicate me:) for I ascribe it to God, as I trust your ladyship, with unfeigned gratitude, will also do. And I mention it, as that whereby you are under obligation to endeavour, your continued temper and deportment may be agreeable to such beginnings.

For now (which is the other thing, whereof a distinct observation

ought to be had) in the continuance and settled state of the affliction, when the fury of the first assault is over, and we have had leisure to recollect ourselves, and recover our dissipated spirits, though we are then more sensible of pain and smart, yet also the power of using our own thoughts is restored. And being so, although we are too apt to use them to our greater hurt, and prejudice, we are really put again into a capacity of using them to our advantage, which our good God doth in much wisdom and righteousness require we should do. Whereupon we are to expect his continual assistance for our support under continued affliction, in the way of concurrence and co-operation with our due use of our own thoughts, aptly chosen, as much as in us is, and designed by ourselves, for our own comfort and support.

Now as for thoughts suitable to your honour's case, I have reason to be conscious that what I shall write can make but little accession, I will not say to a closet, but to a mind so well furnished, as you are owner of: yet I know it is remote from you to slight a well-intended offer and essay, that really proceeds only from a very compassionate sense of your sorrows, and unfeigned desire to contribute something (if the Father of mercys, and the God of all comforts and consolations will please to favour the endeavour) to your relief.

And the thoughts which I shall most humbly offer, will have that first and more immediate design, but to persuade your making use of your own; that is, that you would please to turn and apply them to subjects more apt to serve this purpose, the moderating your own grief, and the attaining an habitual well-tempered cheerfulness, for your remaining time in this world. For I consider how incident it is to the afflicted, to indulge to themselves an unlimited liberty in their sorrows, to give themselves up to them, to make them meat and drink, to justify them in all their excesses, as that (otherwise) good and holy man of God did his anger, and say, "they do well to be sorrowful even to the death," and (as another) to "refuse to be comforted." And I also consider that our own thoughts must, and will always be the immediate ministers either of our trouble or comfort, though as to the latter, God only is the supreme author; and we altogether insufficient to think any thing that good is, as of ourselves. It is God that comforts those that are cast down, but by our own thoughts employed to that purpose, not without them.

I do not doubt, Madam, but if you once fixedly apprehend that there is sin in an over-abounding sorrow, you will soon endeavour its restraint: for I cannot think you would more earnestly set yourself to avoid any thing, than what you apprehend will offend God, especially the doing that in a continued course. Is there any time when joy in God is a duty? 'Tis very plain the sorrow that excludes it is a sin. How the former may appear to be a duty, and how far, let it be considered.

It is not to be doubted but that he that made us hath a right to rule us; he that gave us being, to give us law: nor again, that the Divine government reaches our minds, and that they are the prime

and first seat of his empire. "His kingdom is within us." We are not then, to exercise our thoughts, desires, love, joy, or sorrow, according to our own will but his; not as we please, or find ourselves inclined, but suitably to his precepts and purposes, his rules and ends.

It is evident that withal, the earthly state is mixed, intermediate between the perfect felicity of heaven, and the total misery of hell: and farther, that the temper of our spirits ought to have in it a mixture of joy and sorrow, proportionable to our state, or what there is in it of the just occasions or causes of both.

Where Christianity obtains, and the gospel of our Saviour is preached, there is much greater cause of joy than elsewhere. The visible aspect of it imports a design to form men's minds to gladness, in as much as, wheresoever it comes, it proclaims peace to the world, and represents the offended Majesty of heaven willing to be reconciled to his offending creatures on earth. So the angel prefaced the gospel, when our Lord was born into the world, Luke ii. "I tell you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And so the multitude of accompanying angels sum it up; "Glory be to God in the highest, Peace on earth, good will towards men."

To them that truly receive the gospel, and with whom it hath its effect, the cause of rejoicing riseth much higher. For if the offer and hope of reconciliation be a just ground of joy, how much more actual agreement with God, upon the terms of the gospel, and reconciliation itself! "We rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. To such there are express precepts given to "rejoice in the Lord always," Phil. iv. 4. And lest that should be thought to have been spoken hastily, and that it might have its full weight, that great apostle immediately adds, "and again I say to you rejoice." And elsewhere, "rejoice evermore," 1 Thess. v. 16.

Hence therefore the genuine right temper and frame of a truly Christian mind and spirit may be evidently concluded to be this, (for such precepts do not signify nothing, nor can they be understood to signify less) viz. an habitual joyfulness, prevailing over all the temporary occasions of sorrow, that occur to them. For none can be thought of that can pre-ponderate, or be equal to the just and great causes of their joy. This is the true frame, model, and constitution of the kingdom of God, which ought to have place in us; herein it consists, viz. "in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17.

Nor is this a theory only, or the idea and notion of an excellent temper of spirit, which we may contemplate indeed, but can never attain to. For we find it also to have been the attainment, and usual temper of Christians heretofore, that "being justified by faith, and having peace with God, they have rejoiced in hope of the glory of God," unto that degree, as even to "glory in their tribulations also," Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. And that in the confidence they should

" be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation," they have hereupon " greatly rejoiced," though with some mixture of heaviness (whereof there was need) from their manifold trials. But that their joy did surmount and prevail over their heaviness is manifest; for this is spoken of with much diminution, whereas they are said to " rejoice greatly," and " with a joy unspeakable and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 8.

Yea, and such care hath the great God taken for the preserving of this temper of spirit among his people more anciently, that even their sorrow for sin itself (the most justifiable of all other) hath had restraints put upon it, lest it should too long exclude or intermit the exercise of this joy. For when a great assembly of them were universally in tears, " upon hearing the Law read, and the sense given," they were forbidden to weep or mourn, or be sorry, because " the joy of the Lord was their strength," Nehem. viii. 8, 9, 10. That most just sorrow had been unjust, had it been continued, so as to exclude the seasonable turn and alternation of this joy. For even such sorrow itself is not required, or necessary for itself. 'Tis remote from the goodness and benignity of God's ever-blessed nature, to take pleasure in the sorrows of his people, as they are such, or that they should sorrow for sorrow's sake; but only as a means and preparative to their following joy. And nothing can be more unreasonable, than that the means should exclude the end, or be used against the purpose they should serve.

It is then upon the whole most manifest, that no temporary affliction whatsoever, upon one who stands in special relation to God, as a reconciled (and which is consequent, an adopted) person, though attended with the most aggravating circumstances, can justify such a sorrow (so deep or so continued) as shall prevail against, and shut out a religious holy joy, or hinder it from being the prevailing principle in such a one. What can make that sorrow allowable, or innocent, (what event of Providence, that can, whatever it is, be no other than an accident to our Christian state) that shall resist the most natural design and end of Christianity itself? that shall deprave and debase the truly Christian temper, and disobey and violate most express Christian precepts? subvert the constitution of Christ's kingdom among men! and turn this earth (the place of God's treaty with the inhabitants of it, in order to their reconciliation to himself, and to the reconciled the portal and gate of heaven, yea and where the state of the very worst and most miserable has some mixture of good in it, that makes the evil of it less than that of hell) into a mere hell to themselves, of sorrow without mixture, and wherein shall be nothing but weeping and wailing.

The cause of your sorrow, Madam, is exceeding great. The causes of your joy are inexpressibly greater. You have infinitely more left than you have lost. Doth it need to be disputed whether God be better and greater than man? or more to be valued, loved, and delighted in? and whether an eternal relation be more considerable than a temporary one? Was it not your constant sense in

your best outward state, "Whom have I in heaven but thee O God, and whom can I desire on earth, in comparison of thee!" Psal. lxxiii. 25. Herein the state of your Ladyship's case is still the same (if you cannot rather with greater clearness, and with less hesitation pronounce those latter words.) The principal causes of your joy are immutable, such as no supervening thing can alter. You have lost a most pleasant, delectable, earthly relative. Doth the blessed God hereby cease to be the best and most excellent good? Is his nature changed! his everlasting covenant reversed and annulled? which is "ordered in all things and sure," and is to be "all your salvation and all your desire," whether he make your house on earth to grow or not to grow, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. That sorrow which exceeds the proportion of its cause, compared with the remaining true and real causes of rejoicing, is in that excess causeless; i. e. that excess of it wants a cause, such as can justify or afford defence unto it.

We are required, in reference to our nearest relations in this world, (when we lose them) "to weep as if we wept not," as well as (when we enjoy them) to "rejoice as if we rejoiced not," because our time here is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. We are finite beings, and so are they. Our passions in reference to them, must not be infinite, and without limit, or be limited only by the limited capacity of our nature, so as to work to the utmost extent of that, as the fire burns, and the winds blow, as much as they can: but they are to be limited by the power, design, and endeavour of our reason and grace (not only by the mere impotency of our nature) in reference to all created objects. Whereas in reference to the infinite uncreated good, towards which there is no danger or possibility of exceeding in our affection, we are never to design to ourselves any limits at all; for that would suppose we had loved God enough, or as much as he deserved, which were not only to limit ourselves, but him too; and were a constructive denial of his infinite immense goodness, and consequently of his very Godhead. Of so great concernment it is to us, that in the liberty we give our affections, we observe the just difference which ought to be in their exercise, towards God, and towards creatures.

It is also to be considered, that the great God is pleased so to condescend, as himself to bear the name, and sustain the capacity of our nearest earthly relations; which implies that what they were to us, in this or that kind, he will be in a transcendent, and far more noble kind. I doubt not but your Ladyship hath good right to apply to yourself those words of the prophet, Isa. lvi. 5. "Thy Maker is thy husband," &c. Whereupon, as he infinitely transcends all that is delectable in the most excellent earthly relation, it ought to be endeavoured, that the affection placed on him should proportionably excel. I cannot think any person in the world would be a more severe or impartial judge of a criminal affection than your Ladyship: or that it would look worse unto any eye, if any one should so deeply take to heart the death of an unrelated person,

as never to take pleasure more, in the life, presence, and conversation of one most nearly related. And you do well know that such an height (or that supremacy) of affection, as is due to the ever-blessed God, cannot without great injury, be placed any where else. As we are to have none other God before him; so him alone we are to love with all our heart and soul, and might and mind.

And it ought farther to be remembered, that whatsoever interest we have or had in any the nearest relative on earth, his interest who made both is far superior. He made us and all things primarily for himself, to serve great and important ends of his own: so that our satisfaction in any creature, is but secondary and collateral to the principal design of its creation.

Which consideration would prevent a practical error and mistake that is too usual with pious persons, afflicted with the loss of any near relation, that they think the chief intention of such a providence is their punishment. And hereupon they are apt to justify the utmost excesses of their sorrow, upon such an occasion, accounting they can never be sensible enough of the Divine displeasure appearing in it; and make it their whole business, (or employ their time and thoughts beyond a due proportion) to find out and fasten upon some particular sin of theirs, which they may judge God was offended with them for, and designed now to punish upon them. It is indeed the part of filial ingenuity, deeply to apprehend the displeasure of our Father, and an argument of great sincerity, to be very inquisitive after any sin for which we may suppose him displeased with us, and apt to charge ourselves severely with it, though perhaps upon utmost inquiry, there is nothing particularly to be reflected on, other than common infirmity incident to the best, (and it is well when at length we can make that judgment, because there really is no more, not for that we did not enquire) and perhaps also God intended no more in such a dispensation, (as to what concerned us in it) than only, in the general, to take off our minds and hearts more from this world, and draw them more intirely to himself. For if we were never so innocent, must therefore such a relative of ours have been immortal? But the error in practice as to this case, lies here; not that our thoughts are *much* exercised this way, but *too much*. We ought to consider in every case, principally, that which is principal. God did not create this or that excellent person, and place him for a while in the world, principally to please us; nor therefore doth he take him away, principally to displease or punish us; but for much nobler and greater ends which he hath proposed to himself concerning him. Nor are we to reckon ourselves so little interested in the great and sovereign Lord of all, whom we have taken to be our God, and to whom we have absolutely resigned and devoted ourselves, as not to be obliged to consider and satisfy ourselves, in his pleasure, purposes, and ends, more than our own, apart from his.

Such as he hath pardoned, accepted, and prepared for himself, are to serve and glorify him in an higher and more excellent capa-

city, than they ever could in this wretched world of ours, and wherein they have themselves the highest satisfaction. When the blessed God is pleased in having attained and accomplished the end and intendments of his own boundless love, (too great to be satisfied with the conferring of only temporary favours in this imperfect state) and they are pleased in partaking the full effects of that love; who are we, that we should be displeased? or that we should oppose our satisfaction, to that of the glorious God, and his glorified creature?

Therefore, Madam, whereas you cannot avoid to think much on this subject, and to have the removal of that incomparable person, for a great theme of your thoughts, I do only propose most humbly to your honour, that you would not confine them to the sadder and darker part of that theme. It hath also a bright side; and it equally belongs to it, to consider whither he is gone, and to whom, as whence and from whom. Let, I beseech you, your mind be more exercised in contemplating the glories of that state your blessed consort is translated unto, which will mingle pleasure and sweetness with the bitterness of your afflicting loss, by giving you a daily intellectual participation (through the exercise of faith and hope) in his enjoyments. He cannot descend to share with you in your sorrows; you may thus every day ascend, and partake with him in his joys. He is a pleasant subject to consider. A prepared spirit made meet for an inheritance with them that are sanctified, and with the saints in light, now entered into a state so connatural, and wherein it finds every thing most agreeable to itself. How highly grateful is it to be united with the true centre, and come home to the Father of Spirits! To consider how pleasant a welcome, how joyful an entertainment he hath met with above! How delighted an associate he is with the general assembly, the innumerable company of angels, and the "spirits of just men made perfect!" How joyful an homage he continually pays to the throne of the Celestial King!

Will your Ladyship think that an hard saying of our departing Lord to his mournful disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, that I said I go to the Father; for my Father is greater than I?" As if he had said, he sits inthroned in higher glory than you can frame any conception of, by beholding me in so mean a condition on earth. We are as remote, and as much short in our thoughts as to the conceiving the glory of the Supreme King, as a peasant, who never saw any thing better than his own cottage, from conceiving the splendour of the most glorious prince's court. But if that "faith, (which) is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," be much accustomed to its proper work and business, the daily delightful visiting and viewing the glorious invisible regions; if it be often conversant in those vast and spacious tracts of pure and brightest light, and amongst the holy inhabitants that replenish them; if it frequently employ itself in contemplating their comely order, perfect harmony, sublime wisdom,

unspotted purity, most fervent mutual love, delicious conversation with one another, and perpetual pleasant consent in their adoration and observance of their eternal King! who is there to whom it would not be a solace to think I have such and such friends and relatives (some perhaps as dear as my own life) perfectly well pleased, and happy among them! How can your love, Madam, (so generous a love towards so deserving an object!) how can it but more fervently sparkle in joy, for his sake, than dissolve in tears for your own?

Nor should such thoughts excite over-hasty impatient desires of following presently into heaven, but to the endeavours of serving God more cheerfully on earth, for our appointed time: which I earnestly desire your Ladyship would apply yourself to, as you would not displease God, who is your only hope, nor be cruel to yourself, nor dishonour the religion of Christians, as if they had no other consolations than this earth can give, and earthly power take from them. Your Ladyship (if any one) would be loth to do any thing unworthy your family and parentage. Your highest alliance is to that Father and family above, whose dignity and honour are I doubt not of highest account with you.

I multiply words, being loth to lose my design. And shall only add that consideration, which cannot but be valuable with you, upon his first proposal, who had all the advantages imaginable to give it its full weight; I mean that of those dear pledges left behind: my own heart even bleeds to think of the case of those sweet babes, should they be bereaved of their other parent too. And even your continued visible dejection would be their unspeakable disadvantage. You will always naturally create in them a reverence of you; and I cannot but apprehend how the constant mien, aspect and deportment of such a parent will insensibly influence the temper of dutiful children; and (if that be sad and despondent) depress their spirits, blunt and take off the edge and quickness, upon which their future usefulness and comfort will much depend. Were it possible their (now glorious) father should visit and inspect you, would you not be troubled to behold a frown in that bright serene face? You are to please a more penetrating eye, which you will best do, by putting on a temper and deportment suitable to your weighty charge and duty; and to the great purposes for which God continues you in the world, by giving over unnecessary solitude and retirement, which (though it pleases) doth really prejudice you, and is more than you can bear. Nor can any rules of decency require more. Nothing that is necessary and truly Christian, ought to be reckoned unbecoming. David's example, 2 Sam. xii. 20. is of too great authority to be counted a pattern of indecency. The God of heaven lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and thereby put gladness into your heart; and give you to apprehend him saying to you, "Arise and walk in the light of the Lord."

That I have used so much freedom in this paper, I make no apology for; but do therefore hide myself in the dark, not judging

it consistent with that plainness which I thought the case might require, to give any other account of myself, than that I am one deeply sensible of your, and your noble relatives great affliction, and who scarce ever bow the knee before the mercy-seat without remembering it: and who shall ever be,

MADAM,

Your Ladyship's

Most sincere honourer, and

Most humble devoted Servant.

Mr. Howe's Answer to the Letter of Bishop Barlow of Lincoln, wherein the Bishop countenanced the execution of the rigorous Laws against Dissenters. (1684.)

RIGHT REVEREND,

As I must confess myself surprized by your late published directions to your Clergy of the County of *Bedford*, so nor will I dissemble, that I did read them with some trouble of mind, which I sincerely profess was more upon your Lordship's account than my own, (who for myself am little concerned) or any other particular person's whatsoever. It was such as it had not been very difficult for me to have concealed in my own breast, or only to have expressed it to God in my prayers for you, (which through his grace I have not altogether omitted to do) if I had not apprehended it not utterly impossible, (as I trust I might, without arrogating unduly to myself) that some or other of those thoughts, which I have revolved in my own mind upon this occasion, being only hinted to your Lordship, might appear to your very sagacious judgment, (for which I have had long, and have still a continuing veneration) some way capable of being cultivated by your own mature and second thoughts, so as not to be wholly unuseful to your Lordship.

My own judgment, such as it is, inclines me not to oppose any thing, either, 1. To the lawfulness of the things themselves which you so much desire should obtain in the practice of the people under your Lordship's pastoral inspection: or 2. To the desirable comeliness of an uniformity in the public and solemn worship of God: or 3. To the fitness of making laws for the effecting of such uniformity: or 4. To the execution of such laws, upon some such persons as may possibly be found among so numerous a people as are under your Lordship's care.

But the things which I humbly conceive are to be deliberated on, are 1. Whether all the laws that are in being about matters of that nature, ought now to be executed upon all the persons which any way transgress them, without distinction of either? 2. Whether it was so well, that your Lordship should advise and press that indistinct execution, which the order (to which the subjoined directions of your Lordship do succenturiate) seems to intend; supposing that designed execution were fit in itself.

I shall not need to speak severally to these heads: your Lordship will sufficiently distinguish what is applicable the one way or the other. But I humbly offer to your Lordship's further consideration, whether it be not a supposable thing, that some persons sound in the faith, strictly orthodox in all the articles of it taught by our Lord Jesus or his Apostles, resolvedly loyal, and subject to the authority of their governors in church and state, of pious, sober, peaceable, just, charitable dispositions and deportments; may yet (while they agree with your Lordship in that evident principle, both by the law of nature and scripture, that their prince and inferior rulers ought to be actively obeyed in all lawful things) have a formed fixed judgment, (for what were to be done in the case of a mere doubt, that hath not arrived to a settled preponderation this way or that, is not hard to determine) of the unlawfulness of some or other of the rites and modes of worship enjoined to be observed in this church? For my own part, though perhaps I should not be found to differ much from your Lordship in most of the things here referred unto, I do yet think that few metaphysical questions are disputed with nicer subtlety, than the matter of the ceremonies has been by Archbishop Whitgift, Cartwright, Hooker, Parker, Dr. Burgess, Dr. Ames, Gillespy, Jeanes, Calderwood, Dr. Owen, Baxter, &c. Now is it impossible that a sincere and sober Christian may, with an honest heart, have so weak intellectuals, as not to be able to understand all the punctilios upon which a right judgment of such a matter may depend? And is it not possible there may be such a thing, as a mental as well as a merely sensitive antipathy, not vincible by ordinary methods? Is there no difference to be put between things *essential* to our religion, and things confessed *indifferent* on the one hand, and on the other judged *unlawful;* on both hands but *accidental?* (though they that think them *unlawful*, dare not allow themselves a liberty of sinning, even in *accidentals.*) If your Lordship were the *Paterfamilias* to a numerous family of children and servants, among whom one or other very dutiful child takes offence, not at the sort of food you have thought fit should be provided, but somewhat in the sauce or way of dressing, which thereupon he forbears; you try all the means which your paternal wisdom and severity thinks fit, to overcome that aversion, but in vain; would you finally famish this child, rather than yield to his inclination in so small a thing?

My Lord, your Lordship well knows the severity of some of those laws which you press for the execution of is such, as being executed, they must infer the utter ruin of them who observe them not, in their temporal concernments; and not that only, but their deprivation of the comfortable advantages appointed by our blessed Lord, for promoting their spiritual and eternal well-being. I cannot but be well persuaded not only of the mere sincerity, but eminent sanctity of divers, upon my own knowledge and experience of them, who would sooner die at a stake, than I or any man can prevail with them (notwithstanding our rubrick, or whatever can

[illegible] said to facilitate the matter) to kneel before the consecrated elements at the Lord's Table. Would your Lordship necessitate such, *perdere substantiam propter accidentia?* What if there be considerable numbers of such in your Lordship's vastly numerous flock; will it be comfortable to you, when an account is demanded of your Lordship by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls concerning them, only to be able to say, Though Lord I did believe the provisions of thine house purchased for them, necessary and highly useful for their salvation, I drove them away as dogs and swine from thy table, and stirred up such other agents as I could influence against them, by whose means I reduced many of them to beggary, ruined many families, banished them into strange countries, where they might (for me) serve other gods; and this not for disobeying any immediate ordinance or law of thine, but because for fear of offending thee, they did not in every thing comport with my own appointments, or which I was directed to urge and impose upon them? How well would this practice agree with that apostolical precept, 'him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations?' I know not how your Lordship would relieve yourself in this case, but by saying they were not weak, nor conscientious, but wilful and humoursome. But what shall then be said to the subjoined expostulation, 'Who art thou that judgest thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.' What if they have appeared conscientious, and of a very unblameable conversation in all things else? What if better qualified for Christian communion in all other respects, than thousands you admitted? If you say you know of none such under your charge so severely dealt with, it will be said, why did you use such severity towards them you did not know? or urge and animate them to use it, whom you knew never likely to distinguish? A very noted Divine of the Church of England, said to me in discourse not very long ago, upon mention of the ceremonies, 'Come, come, the Christian church and religion is in a consumption; and it ought to be done as in the case of consumptive persons, shave off the hair to save the life.' Another (a dignified person) present, replied, 'I doubt not it will be so, in the Philadelphian state.' I long thought few had been in the temper of their minds nearer it than your Lordship, and am grieved, not that I so judged, but that I am mistaken; and to see your Lordship the first public example to the rest of your order in such a course. Blessed Lord! How strange is it that so long experience will not let us see, that little, and so very disputable matters can never be the terms of union so much to be desired in the Christian church; and that in such a case as ours is, nothing will satisfy, but the destruction of them, whose union upon so nice terms we cannot obtain; and then to call *Solitudinem, Pacem!* But we must, it seems, understand all this rigour your Lordship shews, to proceed from love, and that you are for destroying the Dissenters, only to mend their understandings, and because *Afflictio dat intellectum.* I hope indeed God will sanctify the affliction which you give and

procure them, to blessed purposes; and perhaps *periissent nisi periissent*: but for the purposes your Lordship seems to aim at, I wonder what you can expect? Can you by undoing men, change the judgment of their consciences? Or if they should tell you, we do indeed in our consciences judge, we shall greatly offend God, by complying with your injunctions, but yet to save being undone, we will do it: will this qualify them for your communion? If your Lordship think still, you have judged and advised well in this matter, you have the judgment of our Sovereign, upon twelve years experience, lying against you: you have as to one of the laws you would have executed, the judgment of both Houses of Parliament against you, who passed a bill (to which perhaps you consented) for taking it away.* You have (as to all of them) the judgment of the last House of Commons sitting at Westminster, so far as to the season then, of executing those laws. It may be your Lordship thinks it now a fitter season: but if you have misjudged, or misdone against your judgment, I pray God to rectify your error by gentler methods, and by less affliction than you have designed to your brethren: and do not for all this doubt, (any more for your part than my own) to meet you there one day, where *Luther* and *Zuinglius* are well agreed. If I did think that would contribute any thing to the honest and truly charitable design of this letter, I should freely and at large tell you my name: and do however tell you, I am,

A sincere honourer of your Lordship,

And your very faithful, humble Servant.

Mr. Howe's Letter to his Friends, on setting out to travel with Lord Wharton. (August 1685.)

To such in and about London, among whom I have laboured in the work of the Gospel.

My most dearly beloved in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, grace, mercy, and peace, be thro' him multiply'd unto you.

That I am at this time at this distance from you, is I am persuaded (upon the experience I have had of your great love and value of my poor labours) not pleasant to you, and I do assure you it is grievous to me, though I murmur not at the wise and holy Pro-

* The complete History of England, vol. 3. page 393, tells us, that the Commons in 1680, prepared a Bill 'for exempting His Majesty's Protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of *England*, from the penalties imposed upon the Papists, by repealing the Act of 35. Eliz.' This Bill passed the Commons, and was agreed to by the Lords, and lay ready for His Majesty's assent. But when His Majesty came to the throne, to pass this among other Bills, this was taken from the table, and never heard of after. Which no man durst have done, without the King's command, or at least his privity and connivance at it. The loss of this Bill was complained of, in the next parliament at Oxford, but without satisfaction or redress.

vidence that hath ordered things thus, in reference to you and me: but it added to my trouble, that I could not so much as bid farewell to persons to whom I had so great indearments, the solemnity whereof you know our circumstances would not admit. Nor could I have opportunity to communicate to you the grounds of my taking this long journey, being under promise while the matter was under consideration, not to speak of it to any one that was not concerned immediately about it: neither could I think that imprudent in itself, where acquaintance was so numerous; silence towards dearest friends in such cases usually being designed for an apology to all others. And after the resolution was taken, my motion depending on another, I had not time for that or any such purposes. And should I yet communicate them, as they lie particularly in my own thoughts, it would lose time that I may more profitably employ, for both you and myself, while I do it not. You will, I may be confident, be more prudent and equal, than to judge of what you do not know: but so much I shall in the general say, that the providence of God gave me the prospect of a present quiet abode, with some opportunity of being serviceable; (and I hope, as it may prove through his help and blessing unto you, if I have life and health to finish what I have been much pressed by some of yourselves to go on with;) which opportunity I could not hope to have nearer you, at least without being unreasonably burdensome to some, while I was designing service as much as in me lay to all. It much satisfies me that I have a record above, I am not designing for myself; that He who knoweth all things knows, I love not this present world, and I covet not an abode in it, (nor have I when it was most friendly to me) upon any other account, than upon doing some service to Him, and the souls of men. It therefore has been my settled habitual sense and sentiment a long time, to value and desire (with submission to sovereign good pleasure) peace and quiet, with some tolerable health, more than life. Nor have I found any thing more destructive to my health, than confinement to a room a few days in the city air, which was much better and more healthful to me formerly, than since the anger and jealousies of such as I never had a disposition to offend, have of later times occasioned persons of my circumstances very seldom to walk the streets.

But my hope is, God will in his good time incline the hearts of rulers more to favour such as cannot be satisfied with the public constitutions in the matters of God's worship, and that are innocent and peaceable in the land; and that my absence from you will be for no long time, it being my design, with dependence upon his gracious providence and pleasure, in whose hands our times are, if I hear of any door open for service with you, to spend the health and strength which God shall vouchsafe me, (and which I find through his mercy much improved since I left you) in his work with and among you. In the mean time, I believe it will not be unacceptable to you, that I offer you some of my thoughts and counsels for your present help, such as are not new to me, nor as you will find to

youselves, who are my witnesses, that I have often inculcated such things to you; but they may be useful to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.

I. I beseech you more earnestly endeavour to reduce the things you know (and have been by many hands instructed in out of the gospel of our Lord) to practice. Nothing can be more absurd than to content ourselves with only a notional knowledge of practical matters. We should think so in other cases. As if any man should satisfy himself to know the use of food, but famish himself by never eating any, when he hath it at hand: or that he understands the virtues of this or that cordial, but languishes away to death in the neglect of using it, when it might cheer his spirits and save his life. And the neglect of applying the great things of the Gospel to the proper uses and purposes of the Christian life, is not more foolish, (only as the concernments they serve for are more important) but much more sinful and provoking to God. For we are to consider whence the Revelation comes. They are things which the mouth of the Lord hath spoken; uttered by the breath of the eternal God, as all Scriptures are said to be. God breathed, as that expression may be literally rendered, 2 Tim. iii. 16. And how high a contempt and provocation is it of the great God, so totally to pervert and disappoint the whole design of that Revelation he hath made to us, to know the great things contained therein, only for knowing sake, which he hath made known that we might live by them! And oh, what holy and pleasant lives should we lead in this world, if the temper and complexion of our souls did answer and correspond to the things we know! The design of preaching has been greatly mistaken, when it has been thought, it must still acquaint them who live (and especially who have long lived) under it, with some new thing. Its much greater and more important design is the impressing of known things (but too little considered) upon the hearts of hearers, that they may be delivered up into the mould and form of the doctrine taught them, as Rom. vi. 12: And may so learn Christ as more and more to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put off the old man and put on the new, Eph. iv. 20. The digesting our food is what God now eminently calls for.

II. More particularly labour to have your apprehensions of the future state of the unseen world, and eternal things, made more lively and efficacious daily, and that your faith of them may be such as may truly admit to be called the very *substance* and *evidence* of those things. Shall that glorious everlasting state of things be always as a dark shadow with us, or as the images we have of things in a dream, ineffectual and vanishing, only because we have not seen with our eyes, where God himself hath by his express word made the representations of them to us, who never deceived us, as our own eyes and treacherous senses have done? Why do we not live as just now entering into the eternal state, and as if we now beheld the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour,

when we are as much assured of them as if we beheld them? Why do we not oftener view the representation of the heavens vanishing, the elements melting, the earth flaming, the angels every where dispersed to gather the elect, and them ascending, caught up to meet the Redeemer in the air, ever to be with the Lord? What a trifle will the world be to us then!

III. Let the doctrine of the Redeemer be more studied, and of his mighty undertaking, with the immediate design of it, not merely to satisfy for sin by the sacrifice he once for all made of himself, and so to procure our pardon and justification, without effecting any thing upon us, but to redeem us from all iniquity, to purify us to himself, &c. and to form us after his own holy likeness, and for such purposes to give his Holy Spirit to us. Consider that our Redeemer is mighty, who hath such kind designs upon us; and that as they shall not therefore finally fail of accomplishment, so will they be carried on without interruption, and with discernible success, if we fail not as to what part in subordination to him belongs to us. How cheerfully should the redeemed of the Lord go on in their course under such conduct!

IV. Endeavour your faith may be stronger, more efficacious and practical, concerning the doctrine of Providence, and that the workings and events of it lie all under the management, and in the hand of the Redeemer, who is 'head over all things to the church:' That therefore how grievous and bitter soever be his people's lot and portion at any time, there cannot but be kindness at the bottom; and that not only designing the best end, but taking the fittest way to it. For can Love itself be unkind, so as not to design well! or Wisdom itself err so, as to take an improper course in order thereto! Hereupon let not your spirits be imbittered by the present dispensation of Providence you are under, whereby you are in so great a part deprived of the helps and means of your spiritual advantage, which you like and relish most. And to this purpose consider,

1. Our wise and merciful Lord (though perhaps such means might be in some measure useful to us) doth for the present judge, that his rebuking our undue use of them will be more useful; either overvaluing or undervaluing his instruments, turning his Ordinances into mere formalities, preferring the means of grace (as they are fitly called) before the end, grace itself.

2. Consider whether there be no disposition of spirit, to treat others as you are treated. The inward temper of our minds and spirits is so much the more narrowly to be inspected, by how much the less there is opportunity to discover it by outward acts. As to such as differ from us about the forms and ceremonies that are now required in the worship of God, would we not be glad if they were as much restrained from using them in their worship, as we from worshipping without them? And do not we think that that would as much grieve them, as our restraint doth us? And why should we suppose that their way should not as much suit their spirits, and be

as grateful to them, as ours to us? But we are in the right way, some will say, and they in the wrong: And why cannot any man say the same thing with as much confidence as we? Or do we think there is no difference to be put between controversies about matter of circumstance, and about the essentials of Christianity? Undoubtedly till those that affect the name of the Reformed, and count it more their glory to be called *Protestants* than to be good Christians, have learned to mingle more justice with their religion, and how better to apply that great advice of our Lord's, 'Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do that to them,' &c. and till they become studious of excelling other men, in substantial goodness, abstractedness from the world, meekness, humility, sobriety, self-denial and charity, and to lay a greater stress hereon, than on being of one or other denomination, God's controversy will not cease.

I reckon it much to be considered, and I pray you consider it deeply, that after that great precept, Eph. iv. 30. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,' it immediately follows, ver. 31. 'Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice:' plainly implying that the Spirit of God, that Spirit of all love, goodness, sweetness, and benignity, is grieved by nothing more than by our bitterness, wrathfulness, &c. And it appears that the discernible restraint and departure of that blessed Spirit from the church of Christ in so great a measure, for many foregoing generations, in comparison of the plentiful effusion of it in the first age, hath ensued upon the growth of that wrathful contentious spirit which shewed itself early in the *Gnostick*, but much more in the after *Arian* persecution, which was not in some places less bloody than the Pagan persecution had been before. Oh the gentleness, kindness, tenderness, and compassionateness of the evangelical truly Christian spirit, as it most eminently appeared in our Lord Jesus Christ himself! And we are told, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he his none of his,' Rom. viii. 9. And how easy and pleasant is it to one's own self, to be void of all wrathfulness and vindictive designs or inclinations towards any other man. For my own part, I should not have that peace and consolation in a suffering condition (as my being so many years under restraint from that pleasant work of pleading with sinners that they might be saved, is the greatest suffering I was liable to in this world) as through the goodness of God I have found, and do find in being conscious to myself of no other than kind and benign thoughts towards them I have suffered by, and that my heart tells me I desire not the least hurt to them that would do me the greatest; and that I feel within myself an unfeigned love and high estimation of divers, accounting them pious worthy persons, and hoping to meet them in the all-reconciling world, that are yet (through some mistake) too harsh towards us who dissent from them: And in things of this nature I pray that you and I may abound more and more.

But again, as I would not have your spirits embittered, so I

would not have your spirits discouraged, or sunk in dejection. 'The Lord will not cast off his people, because it hath pleased him to make them his people,' 1 Sam. xii. 22. I do not mean those of this or that party, but who fear God and work righteousness, be they of what party soever. As I often think of that saying of an antient (*Clem. Alex.*) that he counted not that philosophy, which was peculiar to this or that sect, but whatsoever of truth was to be found in any of them; so I say of christianity, it is not that which is appropriate to this or that party, but whatsoever of sincere religion shall be found common to them all. Such will value and love his favour and presence, and shall have it; and he will yet have such a people in the world, and I doubt not more numerous than ever. And as the bitterness of christians one towards another chased away his spirit, his spirit shall vanquish and drive away all that bitterness, and consume our other dross. And as the apostacy long ago foretold, and of so long continuance in the christian church, hath been begun and continued by constant war against the Spirit of Christ, the restitution and recovery of the church, and the reduction of christianity to its antient self, and primitive state, will be by the victory of the Spirit of Christ over that so contrary spirit. Then shall all the enmity, pride, wrathfulness and cruelty, which have rent the church of Christ and made it so little itself, be melted down; and with all their great impurities, besides earthliness, carnality, love of this present world, and prevalence of sensual lusts, be purged more generally away, and his repairing work be done in a way grievous to no one, whereby those that are most absolutely conquered will be most highly pleased; 'not by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.'

In the mean time let us draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us. Let us more study the exercising ourselves to godliness, and take heed of turning the religion of our closets into spiritless uncomfortable formalities. 'Their hearts shall live that seek God.'

To that blessed, and faithful, and covenant keeping God I commit you; and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up farther, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctisfied. And as I hope I shall without ceasing remember you in mine, so I hope you will remember too in your prayers,

Your sincerely affectionate,
Though too unprofitable
Servant in Christ,
JOHN HOWE.

The Case of the Protestant Dissenters represented and argued.

They are under one common obligation with the rest of mankind, by the universal law of nature, to worship God in assemblies.

Men of all sorts of religions, that have ever obtained in the world,

Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, Christians, have in their practice acknowledged this obligation. Nor can it be understood, how such a practice should be so universal, otherwise than from the dictate and impression of the universal law.

Whereas the religion professed in England, is that of reformed Christianity, some things are annexed to the allowed public worship, which are acknowledged to be no parts thereof, nor in themselves necessary; but which the Dissenters judge to be in some part sinful.

They cannot therefore with good conscience towards God, attend wholly and solely upon the public worship which the laws do appoint.

The same laws do strictly forbid their assembling to worship God otherwise.

Which is in effect the same thing, as if they who made, or shall continue such laws, should plainly say, If you will not consent with us in our superadded rites and modes against your consciences, you shall not worship God; or if you will not accept of our additions to the Christian religion, you shall not be Christians: and manifestly tends to reduce to Paganism, a great part of a Christian nation.

They have been wont therefore to meet however in distinct assemblies, and to worship God in a way which their consciences could approve; and have many years continued so to do, otherwise than as they have been hindered by violence.

It is therefore upon the whole fit to enquire,

Q. 1. Whether they are to be blamed for their holding distinct meetings for the worship of God?

For answer to this, it cannot be expected that all the controversies should be here determined, which have been agitated about the lawfulness of each of those things which have been added to the Christian religion and worship, by the present constitution of the Church of England.

But supposing they were none of them simply unlawful, while yet the misinformed minds of the Dissenters could not judge them lawful, though they have made it much their business to enquire and search; being urged also by severe sufferings, which through a long tract of time they have undergone, not to refuse any means that might tend to their satisfaction; they could have nothing else left them to do, than to meet and worship distinctly as they have.

For they could not but esteem the obligation of the universal, natural, divine law, by which they were bound solemnly to worship God, less questionable than that of a law, which was only positive, topical, and humane, requiring such and such additaments to their worship, and prohibiting their worship without them.

The Church of England (as that part affects to be called) distinguished from the rest by those additionals to Christian religion, (pretended to be indifferent, and so confessed unnecessary) hath not only sought to ingross to itself the ordinances of divine worship, but all civil power. So that the privileges that belong either to Christian or humane society are inclosed, and made peculiar to

such as are distinguished by things that in themselves can signify nothing to the making of persons either better Christians, or better men.

Q. 2. Whether the laws enjoining such additions to our religion, as the exclusive terms of Christian worship and communion, ought to have been made, when it is acknowledged on all hands, the things to be added were before not necessary; and when it is known a great number judge them sinful, and must thereby be restrained from worshipping the true and living God?

Ans. The question to any of common sense, answers itself. For it is not put concerning such as dissent from any part of the substance of worship which God hath commanded, but concerning such additions as he never commanded. And there are sufficient tests to distinguish such Dissenters, from those that deny any substantial part of religion, or assert any thing contrary thereto. Wherefore to forbid such to worship that God that made them, because they cannot receive your devised additions, is to exclude that which is necessary, for the mere want of that which is unnecessary.

And where is that man that will adventure to stand forth, and avow the hindering of such persons from paying their homage to the God that made them, if we thus expostulate the matter on God's behalf and their own? Will you cut off from God his right in the creatures he hath made? Will you cut off from them the means of their salvation upon these terms? What reply can the matter admit?

'Tis commonly alledged that great deference is to be paid to the laws, and that we ought to have forborn our assemblies, till the public authority recalled the laws against them: and we will say the same thing, when it is well proved, that they who made such laws, made the world too.

And by whose authority were such laws made? Is there any that is not from God? and hath God given any man authority to make laws against himself, and to deprive him of his just rights from his own creatures?

Nor if the matter be well searched into, could there be so much as a pretence of authority derived for such purposes from the people, whom every one now acknowledges the first receptacle of derived governing power. God can, 'tis true, lay indisputable obligations by his known laws, upon every conscience of man about religion, or any thing else. And such as represent any people, can according to the constitution of the Government, make laws for them, about the things they entrust them with: but if the people of England be asked man by man, will they say they did entrust to their representatives, their religion, and their consciences, to do with them what they please? When it is your own turn to be represented by others, is this part of the trust you commit? What Dr. Sherlock * worthily says concerning a Bishop, he might (and particu-

* Vindication of some Protestant Principles, &c. p. 52.

larly after, doth) say concerning every other man, 'he can be no more represented in a council, than at the day of judgment: every man's soul and conscience must be in his own keeping; and can be represented by no man.'

It ought to be considered that Christianity, wherein it superadds to the law of nature, is all matter of revelation. And 'tis well known that even among Pagans in the settling rites and institutes of religion†, revelation was pretended at least, upon an implied principle, that in such matters humane power could not oblige the people's consciences.

We must be excused therefore, if we have in our practice expressed less reverence for laws made by no authority received either from God or man.

We are therefore injuriously reflected on, when it is imputed to us, that we have by the use of our liberty, acknowledged an illegal dispensing power. We have done no other thing herein, than we did when no dispensation was given or pretended, in conscience of duty to him that gave us our breath: nor did therefore practise otherwise, because we thought these laws dispensed with, but because we thought them not laws. Whereupon little need remains of enquiring farther.

Q. 3. Whether such laws should be continued? Against which, besides what may be collected from that which hath been said, it is to be considered, that what is most principally grievous to us, was enacted by that Parliament, that as we have too much reason to believe, suffered itself to be dealt with, to enslave the nation, in other respects as well as this; and which (to his immortal honour) the noble Earl of Danby procured to be dissolved, as the first step towards our national deliverance.

And let the tenour be considered of that horrid law, by which our *Magna Charta* was torn in pieces; the worst and most infamous of mankind, at our own expence, hired to accuse us; multitudes of perjuries committed, convictions made without a jury, and without any hearing of the persons accused; penalties inflicted, goods rifled, estates seized and embezzled, houses broken up, families disturbed, often at unseasonable hours of the night, without any cause, or shadow of a cause, if only a malicious villain would pretend to suspect a meeting there! No law in any other case like this! As if to worship God without those additions, which were confessed unnecessary, were a greater crime than theft, felony, murder, or treason! Is it for our reputation to posterity, that the memory of such a law should be continued?

And are we not yet awakened, and our eyes opened enough to see, that the making and execution of the laws, by which we have suffered so deeply for many by-past years, was only, that Protestants might destroy Protestants, and the easier work be made for the introduction of popery, that was to destroy the residue?

† As by Numa from his Egeria. And their Priests, to whom the regulation of such matters was left, were generally believed to be inspired.

Nor can any malice deny, or ignorance of observing Englishmen overlook, this plain matter of fact: after the dissolution of that before-mentioned Parliament, Dissenters were much caressed, and endeavoured to be drawn into a subserviency to the Court designs, especially in the election of after Parliaments. Notwithstanding which, they every where so entirely and unanimously fell in with the sober part of the nation, in the choice of such persons for the three Parliaments that next succeeded (two held at Westminster, and that at Oxford,) as it was known would, and who did most generously assert the liberties of the nation, and the Protestant religion. Which alone (and not our mere dissent from the Church of England, in matters of religion, wherein Charles II. was sufficiently known to be a Prince of great indifferency) drew upon us, soon after the dissolution of the last of those Parliaments, that dreadful storm of persecution, that destroyed not a small number of lives in goals, and ruined multitudes of families.

Let English freemen remember, what they cannot but know, that it was for our firm adherence to the civil interests of the nation, (not for our different modes of religion from the legal way, though the laws gave that advantage against us, which they did not against others) that we endured the calamities of so many years.

When by the late King some relaxation was given us, what arts and insinuations have been used with us, to draw us into a concurrence to designs tending to the prejudice of the nation? And with how little effect upon the generality of us, it must be great ignorance not to know, and great injustice to deny.

But he that knoweth all things, knoweth that though in such circumstances, there was no opportunity for our receiving public and authorized promises, when we were all under the eye of watchful jealousy; yet as great assurances as were possible, were given us by some that we hope will now remember it, of a future established security from our former pressures. We were told over and over, when the excellent Heer Fagel's Letter came to be privately communicated from hand to hand, how easily better things would be had for us, than *that* encouraged Papists to expect, if ever that happy change should be brought about, which none have now beheld with greater joy than we.

We are loth to injure those who have made us hope for better, by admitting a suspicion that we shall now be disappointed and deceived, (as we have formerly been, and we know by whom) or that we shall suffer from them a religious slavery, for whose sakes we have suffered so grievous things, rather than do the least thing that might tend to the bringing upon them a civil slavery.

We cannot but expect from Englishmen that they be just and true. We hope not to be the only instances, whereby the *Anglica Fides* and the *Punica* shall be thought all one.

But if we, who have constantly desired, and as we have had opportunity, endeavoured the saving of the nation, must however be ruined, not to greaten (one hair) the wealth and dignity of it,

but only to gratify the humour of them who would yet destroy it; we who are competently inured to sufferings, shall through God's mercy be again enabled to endure: but He that sits in the heavens will in his own time judge our cause, and we will wait his pleasure; and we hope suffer all that can be inflicted, rather than betray the cause of reformed Christianity in the world.

But our affairs are in the hands of men of worth and honour, who apprehend how little grateful a name they should leave to posterity, or obtain now with good men of any persuasion, if under a pretence of kindness to us, they should now repeat the arts of ill men, in an ill time. Great minds will think it beneath them to sport themselves with their own cunning, in deceiving other men, which were really in the present case too thin not to be seen through, and may be the easy attainment of any man, that hath enough of opportunity, and integrity little enough for such purposes. And it is as much too gross to endeavour to abuse the authority of a nation, by going about to make that stoop to so mean a thing, as to make a shew of intending what they resolve to their utmost shall never be.

But some may think, by concessions to us, the Church of England will be ruined, and a great advantage given to the bringing in of Popery.

To which we say, the generality of the Dissenters differ from the Church of England, in no substantials of doctrine and worship, no nor of government, provided it be so managed, as to attain its true acknowledged end: the favouring of us therefore will as much ruin the church, as its enlargement and additional strength will signify to its ruin.

And doth not the world know, that wherein we differ from them, we differ from the Papists too? And that for the most part, wherein they differ from us, they seem to agree with them?

We acknowledge their strong, brave, and prosperous opposition to Popery: but they have opposed it by the things wherein they agree with us. Their differences from us, are no more a fence against Popery, than an inclosure of straw is against a flame of fire.

But it is wont to be said, we agree not among ourselves, and know not what we would have.

And do all that go under the name of the Church of England agree among themselves? We can shew more considerable disagreements among them, than any can between the most of us, and a considerable part of them. They all agree, 'tis true, in conformity: and we all agree in nonconformity. And is not this merely accidental to Christianity and Protestantism? And herein is it not well known that the far greater part of reformed Christendom do more agree with us?

An arbitrary line of uniformity in some little accidents, severs a small part of the Christian world from all the rest. How unreasonably is it expected that therefore all the rest must in every thing

else agree among themselves? Suppose any imaginary line to cut off a little segment from any part of the terrestrial globe; it is as justly expected that all the rest should be of one mind. If one part of England be taylors, they might as well expect that all the people besides should agree to be of one profession.

Perhaps some imagine it dishonourable to such as have gone before them in the same ecclesiastical stations and dignities, if now any thing should be altered, which their judgment did before approve and think fit.

But we hope that temptation will not prove invincible, viz. of so excessive a modesty as to be afraid of seeming wiser, or better natured, or of a more Christian temper than their predecessors.

But the most of us do agree not only with one another, but in the great things above-mentioned, with the Church of England *too:* and in short, that the reproach may cease for ever with those that count it one, they will find with us, when they please to try, a very extensive agreement on the terms of King Charles II.'s Declaration about ecclesiastical affairs, in 1660.

Q. 4. Whether it be reasonable to exclude all that in every thing conform not to the Church of England, from any part or share of the civil power?

Ans. The difference or nonconformity of many is so minute, that it would be as reasonable to exclude all whose hair is not of this or that colour. And what if we should make a distermination, by the decision this way or that of any other disputed question, that may be of as small concernment to religion? Suppose it be that of *eating blood*, for the decision whereof one way, there is more pretence from God's word, than for any point of the disputed conformity: would it not be a wise constitution, that whosoever thinks it lawful to eat black-pudding, shall be capable of no office? &c.

But we tremble to think of the Exclusive Sacramental Test, brought down as low as to the keeper of an alehouse. Are all fit to approach the sacred table, whom the fear of ruin, or hope of gain may bring thither? We cannot but often remember with horror, what happened three or four years ago: a man that led an ill life, but frequented the church, was observed not to come to the Sacrament; and pressed by the officers to come, he yet declined, knowing himself unfit: at length being threatened and terrified, he came; but said to some present at the time of the solemn action, that he came only to avoid being undone, and took them to witness that what he there received, he took only as common bread and wine, not daring to receive them as the body and blood of Christ. It is amazing, that among Christians, so venerable an institution should be prostituted to the serving of so mean purposes, and so foreign to its true end! And that doing it after the manner of the Church of England must be the qualification! As if England were another Christendom; or it were a greater thing to conform in every punctilio to the rules of this church, than of Christ himself!

But we would fain know whose is that holy table? Is it the table

of this or that party, or the Lord's table? If the Lord's, are not persons to be admitted or excluded upon his terms? Never can there be union or peace in the Christian world till we take down our arbitrary inclosures, and content ourselves with those which our common Lord hath set. If he falls under a curse that alters a man's landmark, to alter God's is not likely to infer a blessing.

The matter is clear as the light of the sun, that as many persons of excellent worth, sobriety and godliness, are entirely in the communion of the Church of England, so there are too many of a worse character, that are of it too; and divers prudent, pious, and sober-minded persons that are not of it. Let common reason be consulted in this case. Suppose the tables turned, and that the rule were to be made the contrary way, viz. that to do this thing, but not by any means after the manner of the Church of England, were to be the qualification; and now suppose one of meaner endowments, as a man and a Christian, do what is required, and not in the way of the Church of England; and another that is of much better, does the same thing in that way; were it suitable to prudence or justice, that because it is done after the way of the Church of England, a fitter man should be reckoned unqualified? and one of less value be taken for qualified, because he does it a different way? Then is all that solid weight of wisdom, diligence, sobriety, and goodness, to be weighed down by a feather.

It must surely be thought the prudence of any government, to comprehend as many useful persons as it can, and no more to deprive itself of the service of such, for any thing less considerable than those qualifications are, by which they are useful, than a man would tear off from himself the limbs of his body, for a spot on the skin.

And really if in our circumstances, we thus narrow our interest, all the rest of the world will say, that they who would destroy us, do yet find a way to be our instructors, and our common enemies do teach us our politics.

P. S. The names of Mr. Hale of Eaton College, and of a later most renowned Bishop of the Church of England, who asserted this principle, that 'if things be imposed under the notion of indifferent, which many think sinful, and a schism follow thereupon, the imposers are the schismatics,' will be great in England, as long as their writings shall live, and good sense can be understood in them.

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*Humble Requests both to Conformists and Dissenters touching their Temper and Behaviour toward each other, upon the lately passed Indulgence.**

"1. That we do not over-magnify our differences, or count them greater than they really are. I speak now (says Mr. Howe)

* Mr. Matthew Henry in his short Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Stretton, that is subjoined to his Funeral Sermon for him, ascribes this

of the proper differences, which the rule itself makes, to which the one sort conforms, and the other conforms not. Remember that there are differences on both parts, *among themselves* incomparably greater than these, by which the one sort differs from the other. There are differences in doctrinal sentiments that are much greater. How unconceivably greater is the difference between good men and bad!—between being a lover of the blessed God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and an enemy!—a real subject of Christ, and of the devil! Have we not reason to apprehend there are of both these, on each side? Let us take heed of having our minds tinctured with a wrong notion of this matter, as if this Indulgence divided England into two Christendoms, or distinguished rather between Christians and Mahometans, as some men's Cyclopic fancies have an unlucky art to represent things; creating ordinary men and things into monsters and prodigious shapes at their own pleasure. It has been an usual saying on both sides, that they were (in comparison) but little things we differed about, or circumstantial things. Let us not unsay it, or suffer an habit of mind to slide into us, that consists not with it. Though we must not go against a judgment of conscience in the least thing, yet let us not confound the true differences of things, but what are really lesser things, let them go for such.

"2. Let us hereupon carefully abstain from judging each other's state Godward upon these differences: for hereby we shall both contradict our common rule, and ourselves. When men make conscience of small and doubtful things on the one hand, and the other, about which they differ, blessed God, how little conscience is made of the plainest and most important rule, not to 'judge one another' for such differences!—Rom. xiv. 3, 13. Why of all the parts of that holy book, is this chapter only thought no part of God's word! or this precept, so variously enforced in this chapter, and so awfully, ver. 10, 11. 'But why dost thou judge thy brother? or, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to me!' Is it a light matter to usurp the throne of Christ, the judgment seat of God? Yet how common has it been to say, Such an one conforms, he hath nothing of God in him; such an one conforms not, it is not conscience, but humour. God forgive both. Had they blotted Rom. xiv. out of their Bibles? It is plain by the whole series of discourse, that it is the judging of men's states, and that by such small matters of difference, that is the thing here for-

paper to Mr. Stretton, and intimates that he had it from a near relation of his, that he was the author of it: but this I have good reason to believe to have been a mistake. Few that have any taste of styles, can question it to have been Mr. Howe's, when once they have read it. But I can add in this case, that I have had full assurance from Mr. Howe's family, that he was the real author of it.—*E. C.*

bidden. Some few things contained in this chapter, as to *receive one another* (as Christians, or such whom God receives) notwithstanding remaining doubts about small matters, and not determining such doubted things in bar to the doubter, ver. 1, 2, 3; and not to lay stumbling blocks in each other's way, ver. 13; not to do the doubted thing with a mind still unsatisfied, ver. 5, 23; not to *censure*, either him that does or forbears; not admitting an hard thought of him, or less favourable, than that what such an one *does*, he does to the Lord, and what the other *forbears*, he forbears to the Lord, ver. 6. These few things I say put in practice, had taken away all differences (that we are now considering) or the inconvenience of them long ago. And we shall still need them as much as ever.

" 3. Let us not value ourselves upon being of this or that side of the severing line. It is Jewish, yea, Pharisaical, to be conceited, and boast ourselves upon externals, and small matters, especially if arbitrarily taken up; and is itself an argument of a light mind, and incomprehensive of true worth. Though I cannot sincerely be of this or that way, but I must think myself in the right, and others in the wrong that differ from me, yet I ought to consider, this is but a small minute thing, a point compared with the vast orb of knowables, and of things needful, and that ought to be known. Perhaps divers that differ from me, are men of greater and more comprehensive minds, and have been more employed about greater matters; and many, in things of more importance, have much more of valuable and useful knowledge than I. Yea, and since these are not matters of salvation we differ about, so that any on either side dare considerately say, he cannot be saved, that is not in these respects of my mind and way; he may have more of sanctifying savoury knowledge, more of solid goodness, more of grace and real sanctity than I; the course of his thoughts and studies having been by converse and other accidents led more off from these things, and perhaps by a good principle been more deeply engaged about higher matters: for no man's mind is able equally to consider all things fit to be considered; and greater things are of themselves more apt to beget holy and good impressions upon our spirits, than the minuter and more circumstantial things, though relating to religion, can be.

" 4. Let us not despise one another for our differing in these lesser matters. This is too common, and most natural to that temper that offends against the foregoing caution. Little spirited creatures valuing themselves for small matters, must consequently have them in contempt that want what they count their own only excellency. He that hath nothing wherein he places worth belonging to him, besides a flaunting peruke and a laced suit, must at all adventures think very meanly of one in a plain garb. Where we are taught not *to judge*, we are forbidden *to despise* or set at nought one another upon these little differences.

" 5. Nor let us wonder that we differ. Unto this we are too apt,

i. e. to think it strange, (especially upon some arguing of the difference) that such a man should conform, or such an one not conform. There is some fault in this, but which proceeds from more faulty causes. Pride too often, and an opinion that we understand so well, that a wrong is done us, if our judgment be not made a standard and measure to another man's. And again, ignorance of human nature, or inconsiderateness rather, how mysterious it is, and how little can be known of it; how secret and latent little springs there are that move this engine to our own mind this way or that; and what bars (which perhaps he discerns not himself) may obstruct and shut up towards us another man's. Have we not frequent instances in other common cases, how difficult it is to speak to another man's understanding! Speech is too penurious, not expressive enough. Frequently between men of sense, much more time is taken up in explaining each other's notions, than in proving or disproving them. Nature and our present state, have in some respects left us open to God only, and made us inaccessible to one another. Why then should it be strange to me, that I cannot convey my thought into another's mind? It is unchristian to censure, as before, and say, Such an one has not my conscience, therefore he has no conscience at all: And it is also unreasonable and rude to say, Such a one sees not with my eyes, therefore he is stark blind. Besides, the real obscurity of the matter is not enough considered. I am very confident an impartial and competent judge, upon the view of books, later and more ancient, upon such subjects, would say, there are few metaphysical questions disputed with more subtlety, than the controversies about conformity and nonconformity. Blessed be God that things necessary to the salvation of souls, and that are of *true necessity* even to the peace and order of the Christian church, are in comparison so very plain.

" Moreover, there is besides understanding and judgment, and diverse from that heavenly gift which in the Scriptures is called *Grace*, such a thing as gust and relish belonging to the mind of man, and I doubt not, to all men, if they observe themselves; and this is as unaccountable and as various as the relishes and disgusts of sense. This they only wonder at, that either understand not themselves, or will consider nobody but themselves. To bring it down to the present case. As to those parts of worship which are of most frequent use in our assemblies, (whether conforming or nonconforming) *prayer*, *and preaching*, *and hearing God's word*, our differences about them, cannot but in part arise from the diversity of this principle, both on the one hand and the other. One sort do more savour prayer by a foreknown form; another that which hath more of surprize, by a grateful variety of unexpected expressions. And it can neither be universally said, it is a better judgment, or more grace, that determines men the one way or the other; but somewhat in the temper of their minds distinct from both, which I know not how better to express than by *mental taste*,

the acts whereof (as the objects are suitable or unsuitable) are relishing or disrelishing, liking or disliking. And this hath no more of mystery in it, than that there is such a thing belonging to our natures, as complacency or displicency in reference to the objects of the mind. And this, in the kind of it, is as common to men, as human nature, but as much diversified in individuals, as men's other inclinations are, that are most fixed, and least apt to admit of change. Now in the mentioned case, men cannot be universally determined either way, by their having better judgment; for no sober man can be so little modest, as not to acknowledge, that there are some of each sentiment, that are less judicious, than some that are of the contrary sentiment in this thing. And to say that to be more determined this way or that, is the certain sign or effect, of a greater measure of grace and sanctity, were a great violation both of modesty and charity. I have not met with any that have appeared to live in more entire communion with God, in higher admiration of him, in a pleasanter sense of his love, or in a more joyful expectation of eternal life, than some that have been wont with great delight publicly to worship God in the use of our *Common Prayer:* and others I have known, as highly excelling in the same respects, that could by no means relish it, but have always counted it insipid and nauseous. The like may be said of relishing or disrelishing sermons preached in a digested set of words, or with a more flowing freedom of speech. It were endless and odious to vie either better judgments, or more pious inclinations, that should universally determine men either the one way or the other in these matters. And we are no more to wonder at these peculiarities in the temper of men's minds, than at their different tastes of meats and drinks; much less to fall out with them, that their minds and notions are not just formed as ours are: for we should remember, they no more differ from us, than we do from them; and if we think we have the clearer light, it is like they also think they have clearer. And it is in vain to say, who shall be judge? For every man will at length judge of his own notions for himself, and cannot help it: for no man's judgment (or relish of things, which influences his judgment, though he know it not) is at the command of his will; and much less of another man's. And therefore,

" 6. Let us not be offended mutually with one another, for our different choice of this or that way, wherein we find most of real advantage and edification. Our greatest concern in this world, and which is common to us all, is the bettering of our spirits, and preparing them for a better world. Let no man be displeased, (especially of those who agree in all the substantials of the same holy religion) that another uses the same liberty, in choosing the way most conducing in his experience to his great end, that he himself also uses, expecting to do it without another man's offence.

" 7. But above all, let us with sincere minds, more earnestly endeavour the promoting the interest of religion itself, of true reformed

christianity, than of this or that party. Let us long to see the religion of Christians become simple, primitive, agreeable to its lovely original state, and again *itself;* and each in our own stations contribute thereto all that we are able, labouring that the internal principle of it may live and flourish in our own souls, and be to our utmost diffused and spread unto other men's. And for its externals, as the ducture of our rule will guide us, so gradually bend towards one common course, that there may at length cease to be any divided parties at all.

" In the mean time, while there are, let it be remembered, that the difference lies among Christians and Protestants, not between such and Pagans. Let us therefore carry it accordingly towards each other; and consider our assemblies are all Christian and Protestant assemblies, differing in their administrations, for the most part, not in the things prayed for, or deprecated, or taught, but in certain modes of expression: and differing really, and in the substance of things, less by mere conformity or nonconformity to the public rule of the law, than many of them that are under it do from one another, and than divers that are not under it. For instance, go into one congregation, that is a conforming one, and you have the public prayers read in the desk, and afterwards a form of prayer perhaps used by the preacher in the pulpit, of his own composure, before he begins his sermon. Go into another congregation, and prayer is performed without either sort of form; and perhaps the difference in this is not so great. It may be the conformist uses no preconceived form of his own, and the nonconformist may. Both instruct the people out of the same holy book of God's word. But now suppose one of the former sort, reads the public prayers gravely, with the appearance of great reverence, fervency, and pious devotion; and one of the latter sort that uses them not, does however pray for the same things, with judgment and with like gravity and affection, and they both instruct their hearers fitly and profitably; nothing is more evident than that the worship in these two assemblies doth much less considerably differ to a pious and judicious mind, than if in the latter the prayers were also read, but carelessly, sleepily, or scenically, flauntingly, and with manifest irreverence, and the sermon like the rest; or than if in the former, all the performance were inept, rude, or very offensively drowsy or sluggish.

" Now let us shew ourselves men, and manly Christians, not swayed by trifles and little things, as children by this or that dress or mode, or form of our religion, which may perhaps please some the more for its real indecency: but know, that if we continue picquering about forms, the life be lost, and we come to bear the character of that church, 'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead,' we may ere long (after all the wonders God hath wrought for us) expect to hear of our candlesticks being removed, and that our sun shall go down at noon-day.

" The true serious spirit and power of religion and godliness,

will act no man against his conscience, or his rule understood, but will oblige him in all acts of worship (as well as of his whole conversation) to keep close to gospel-prescription, so far as he can discern it. And that he will find requires, that in subordination to the divine glory, he seriously design the working out the salvation of his own soul, and take that course in order thereto, put himself under such a ministry, and such a way of using God's ordinances, as he finds most profitable and conducing to that great end, and that doth his soul most real good. If you are religious, or of this or that mode or way of religion, to serve a carnal design for yourself or your party, not to save your soul, you commit the most detestable sacrilege, and alienate the most sacred thing in the world, *religion*, from its true end; which will not only lose that end, but infer an heavy vengeance. Yea, and it is too possible to transgress dangerously, by preferring that which is less, though never so confidently thought to be divine, before that which is greater, or separately from its true end. You greatly prevaricate, if you are more zealously intent to promote independency than christianity, presbytery than christianity, prelacy than christianity, as any of these are the interest of a party, and not considered in subserviency to the Christian interest, nor designed for promoting the edification and salvation of your own soul. But that being your design, living religion will keep your eye upon your end, and make you steady, and constantly true to that, and to your rule, without which you can never hope to reach your end.

"Now hereupon such as conform to the public establishment, and they that dissent from it, may differ from each other upon a twofold account: either (1) as judging the contrary way to be simply unlawful; or (2) as judging it to be only less edifying. It is not the business of this paper to discuss, who herein judge aright, and who wrong: But supposing their judgment to remain as it is (which they themselves however should examine, and if it be wrong rectify;) I shall say somewhat to each of these cases.

"To the former, while your judgment continues as it is, it is true you cannot join in worship with the contrary minded: But nothing forbids, but you can be kind, conversable, courteous towards them; and your common Christian profession (besides the rules of humanity) obliges you so to be: Yea, and even to converse with them as occasion invites, more intimately as Christians, the visible marks of serious christianity appearing in them.

"To the latter sort it is acknowledged, you cannot constantly join in worship with those of the contrary way, because you ought ordinarily to worship God in that way which you judge to be best, and most agreeable to the divine rule, (though you are not obliged utterly to abandon any for its imperfections or corruptions, that is not corrupt in the very essentials;) and you ought most frequently to attend on that which you find to be most edifying to your own soul; as that should be your more ordinary diet that best agrees with you. That way therefore you must most constantly adhere to,

which is most grateful and savoury to you; because you cannot so much edify by what you less relish. But your judgment and latitude will well allow you, sometimes to frequent the assemblies with which you hold not constant communion. And if it will allow, it will also direct you thereto for a valuable end; as that you may signify, you ordinarily decline them not as no Christians, or their worship as no worship, but as more defective, or less edifying, and that you may maintain love, and both express and beget a disposition to nearer union. And if our rulers shall judge such intercourses conducing to so desirable an end, they may perhaps in due time think it reasonable, to put things into that state, that ministers of both sorts may be capable of inviting one another occasionally, to the brotherly offices of mutual assistance in each other's congregations. For which, and all things that tend to make us an happy people, we must wait upon Him in whose hands their hearts are."

Letter from Mr. Howe to Mr. Spilsbury.

"*London, April* 20, 1695.

"My Dear Brother,

"You strangely forget yourself, when you say I gave you no account of the Pinner's-Hall business, of which I sent you a large narrative, when the business was recent; which if it miscarried, tell me so, and I promise you I will never do the like again: for it is a very discouraging thing, when it is so hard a matter to get time to write such long letters, to have them lost by the way; or it is not better, if when they are received, they are taken *pro non scriptis*. God knows how I strove against that division. Almost all my friends that called me to bear a part in that lecture, perceiving the violence of the other party, agreed to remove to a much more convenient place; and they were, so far as I can learn, the greatest part of the *ancient subscribers*, who were grave, sober citizens. They invited Mr. Mead as well as me. If he would not go, I could not help that. His acquaintance lay more among the other, as mine did with these. He and they all know the many meetings we have had to prevent the breach; he and I with divers of them on both sides. And they (who are now of Pinner's-Hall) ran against his advice and mine, when they had desired us to meet purposely to advise them. He hath been since as weary of them as others, as he hath owned to me. They avowed it for a principle before we parted, they would lay any of us aside at their pleasure, without giving a reason: and were told thereupon, we would lay down without giving them a reason; though I think that itself was a sufficient reason. They know too, how often, since the lecture was broken into two, and it appeared now there were two congregations, which no one place could receive, I have urged both publicly and privately, that the same Lecturers might alternate in both

places, which would take away all appearance of disunion; and who they were only that opposed it. Upon these terms I had preached with them still; but I will not be tied to them, nor any party, so as to abandon all others. My frequent insisting in sermons among them, when I saw whither things tended, that these were tokens of what was coming, (just as thou writest) will be thought on it may be hereafter, though then it was not. Above all, that which determined me was, that when I solemnly proposed to them in a sermon, the keeping a Fast, before they went on to that fatal rupture; and it was as solemnly promised by the chief of them, there should be no step farther made without a Fast; it should be declined afterwards. Hereupon I told them in my last sermon there, I should be afraid of confining myself to such as were afraid of fasting and prayer in so important a case, (repeating their own good resolution to that purpose;) and began my course in the other place with a Fast, to lament what we could not prevent. These things will be recollected another day.

"In the mean time there never was greater intimacy or endearedness between Mr. Mead and me, than now. Last week, he desired me only, without any other, to join with him in keeping a Fast at his house, about some private affairs of his own, which we did. I was to have preached at his place to-morrow, after my own work at home, but present indisposition prevents me as to both. We have however, agreed to exchange sometimes; but this cannot last long. The things that threaten us make haste. Only let us be found among the mourners in Zion; comforts will come, in this or the better world. I just now heard from Mr. Porter out of Sussex, who inquires after thee.

In the Lord, farewel:

To thee and thine, from me and mine,
with most entire and undecaying affection,
J. H."

A Letter to a Person of Honour, partly representing the rise of occasional Conformity, and partly the sense of the present Nonconformists, about their yet continuing Differences from the Established Church.

My Lord,

It is well known to such as have understood the state of religion in this kingdom, since the beginning of the Reformation, that there have been very different sentiments about the degrees of that Reformation itself. Some have judged the church with us so insufficiently reformed, as to want as yet the very being of a true Christian church; and wherewith they therefore thought it unlawful to have any communion at all. Of whom many thereupon in the

several successive reigns, withdrew themselves into foreign parts, for the enjoyment of the liberty of such worship, as they judged more agreeable to the word of God.

There have been also no inconsiderable numbers, in former and later times, that though not intirely satisfied with our Reformation, were less severe in their judgment concerning the constitution and practice of the established Church; that is, did not judge its reformation so defective, that they might not communicate at all with it, nor so compleat, but that they ought to covet a communion more strictly agreeable to the Holy Scripture; and accordingly apprehended themselves to lie under a twofold obligation of conscience in reference hereto.

1. Not by any means, totally to cut themselves off on the one hand from the communion of the established Church, in which they found greater and more momentous things to be approved of and embraced with great reverence and complacency, (viz. all the true noble essentials of Christian religion, not subverted as among the Romanists by any contrary doctrines or practices) than could be pretended to remain the matter of their disapprobation and dislike.

2. Nor on the other hand, to decline other communion, which to the judgment of their conscience appeared, in some considerable circumstances, more agreeable to the Christian rule, and to their experience more conducing to their spiritual advantage and edification.

Which latter judgment of theirs (whether itself justifiable or no, we are not now considering) hath been with many so fixed and inflexible, that in several successive reigns, great numbers of such persons, who we had no reason to apprehend had any thought totally to abandon the established Church, yet thought themselves obliged besides, to seek and procure opportunities for such other communions, even with extreme peril not only to their estates and liberties, but to their very lives themselves.

They could not therefore but think both these sorts of communions lawful, viz. whereto they might adjoin, but not confine themselves.

And though to that former sort of communion, there hath for many years by past, been superadded the accidental consideration of a place or office attainable hereby, no man can allow himself to think, that what he before counted lawful, is by this supervening consideration become unlawful: especially if the office were such, as was in no manner of way to be an emolument, but rather an occasion of greater expence to the undertaker of it; that is, only enabled him to serve God, the government and his country, being regularly called hereto, in the condition of a justice of peace, or otherwise. In which capacity it is notorious that divers persons of eminent note of this persuasion, (and some in higher stations) have within the space of forty years past and upwards, been serviceable to the public in divers parts of the nation.

It is not indeed to be thought that the judgment and practice of

such men, can be throughout approved by our reverend fathers and brethren of the established Church, as neither can we pretend it to be so universally by ourselves. But we are remote from any the least suspicion, that persons of so excellent worth and Christian temper, as now preside over the established Church, can suffer themselves to judge or censure men of this sentiment, as being for this single reason, men of hypocritical and insincere minds; but that they will rather think it possible their understandings may be imposed upon, so as this may be the judgment, in the whole, of a sincere though misinformed conscience.

For when they apprehend this church, having all the essential parts of Christian religion, has not, by adding some much disputed things, that are not pretended to be any parts thereof (but that are become as necessary to communion with it, as any the most essential part) thereby unchurched itself, but that they may hold communion with it; yet they do not see that they ought to appropriate their communion to it, so as to refuse all other communion, where the same essentials of Christian religion are to be found, without those additions which really belong not to it; they are apt to think such sentiments of theirs, not to be altogether destitute of some plausible ground.

However, among those that are not intirely in every punctilio of this Church, it hath not any so firm friends, or that are so nearly united in judgment and affection with it, as men of this sentiment.

We for our parts (who because in some things we conform not, are called Nonconformists, whereas no man conforms in every thing) are not allowed to be counted members of this Church, by those that take denominations, not from the intimate essentials of things (as sameness of doctrine, and the institutions of Christian worship) but from loose and very separable accidents: yet thanks be to God, we are not so stupid, as not to apprehend we are under stricter and much more sacred obligations, than can be carried under the sound of a name, to adhere to those our Reverend Fathers and brethren of the established Church, who are most united among themselves, in duty to God and our Redeemer, in loyalty to our Sovereign, and in fidelity to the Protestant religion, as with whom in this dubious state of things we are to run all hazards, and to live and die together. Whether they can have the same assurance, both from interest and inclination of mind, concerning all that are of the same external denomination with themselves, they need not us to advise with.

We have our yet depending lesser differences, about which we have (notwithstanding whatsoever provocation) been generally, and for the most part silent; and see not in reference to them, what can farther remain, than that we for our part, do consider, that all minds are not turned the same way; that such from whom we dissent, no farther differ from us, than we do from them; and we are therefore no more to wonder at them, than ourselves.

And we cannot disallow ourselves to hope, that our Reverend

Fathers and brethren will conceive of us as humbly dissenting from them, without diminution of that great reverence which their real worth claims from us, and without arrogating any thing unduly to ourselves on that account. For though we cannot avoid thinking we are in the right, in those particular things wherein we differ, yet at the same time we know ourselves to be far excelled by them, in much greater and more important things.

My honoured Lord,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient humble Servant,
J. H.

[But after this, some gave themselves a strange liberty of inveighing against this practice of *occasional Communion*, as irrational, unchristian, and altogether unaccountable, and self-condemning. And it at length became a question, whether they that could at all and in any case worship God with the Church of England, should not be obliged to do it for a constancy, or else be incapacitated from holding any place either of profit or trust? And when things were come to this pass, and the Occasional Bill was first brought into the House of Commons in 1702, Mr. Howe committed his thoughts to writing in the following paper:]

A CASE.

Two sorts of Christian Assemblies are wont to meet, severally, for the worship of God, which both hold all the same articles of doctrine taught by Christ or his apostles; and use the same institutions of worship appointed by them: only they differ in this, that the one sort use also some rites, not so appointed, which the other use not.

Two Gentlemen, Sir T—— and Sir J——, are of equal estates: but Sir T—— lives not so regularly, more seldom comes to the worship of God in any Christian assembly; yet when he doth, resorts only to one of the former sort.

Sir J—— is a sober virtuous person, of approved piety, prudence, justice, fortitude, and who publickly worships God, sometimes in the one sort of assembly, and sometimes in the other.

The question is not, whether some lewd and vicious persons may not frequent both sorts of assemblies; nor whether some sober and pious persons may not frequent those of the former sort only.

But whether Sir J—— ought to be rendered incapable of serving the Government, (to which he hath constantly expressed himself well affected) in any station civil or military, for this single reason, because he sometimes worships God in assemblies of the latter sort; (whether it be his infelicity, ill-humour, or mistake whereof yet he is not convinced:) while Sir T—— (who is as little convinced of his ill life) is left capable? At least if the one be incapable, should not both?

But if the question be determined the other way, monstrous! How will that determination of an English Parliament stand in the

annals of future time! How will wiser posterity blush they had such progenitors! For can it be supposed, a nation will be always drunk? Or if ever it be sober, will it not be amazed, there ever was a time, when a few ceremonies, of which the best thing that ever was said was that they were indifferent, have enough in them to outweigh all religion, all morality, all intellectual endowments, natural or acquired, which may happen in some instances to be on the wrong side, (as it must now be reckoned) when on the other, is the height of profaneness, and scorn at religion; the depth of debauchery and brutality, with half a wit, hanging between sense and nonsense: only to cast the balance the more creditable way, there is the skill to make a leg, to dance to a fiddle, nimbly to change gestures, and give a loud response, which contain the answer for the villanies of an impure life!

If those little pieces of church-modishness have so much in them of real value, in all these are they not well enough paid by the whole church-revenues of England, without stigmatizing every body that so much admires them not?

And while divers of real worth live upon charity, some with difficulty getting, others (educated to modesty) with greater difficulty begging their bread!

But do those who are not contented to ingross all the legal emoluments, think there is no God in heaven, that knows their large promises, at the beginning of this Revolution, of great abatements in their church constitution; when now, without abating one hair, they must have all conformed to it in every punctilio, or be (as much as in them is) made infamous, and the scorn of the nation?

But I draw a veil, and am not for dilating upon this matter.

I shall only add, that as the Dissenters have been considerable losers, as to their interest as a party, by this *occasional conformity*, and might easily from the first foresee that they should be so, they appear to me to have acted a very generous part in practising and defending it: and yet they have met with most unbrotherly treatment on this account from those to whom they were willing to approach as near as they could, while some have run them down upon this account as perfect hypocrites; and others have represented this *occasional conformity* as no commendable charity, as long as they did not come up to constant conformity, and yield the cause to them entirely. If this is doing as men would be done unto, it is very strange! Posterity it is to be hoped will judge more favourably. However after such treatment, so oft repeated, and so long continued, if the Dissenters should for the future be more sparing in this way of shewing their charity, which they to whom they would express it, seem so resolved to misinterpret, I think it cannot be very surprising: and if it should be attended with any ill consequences, I doubt these Gentlemen will find they must lie at their doors at last.

Mr. Howe's Introduction or Preface to his last Will and Testament.

I, John Howe, minister of the Gospel of Christ, in serious consideration (though through God's mercy in present health) of my frail and mortal state, and cheerfully waiting (blessed be God) for a seasonable unfeared dissolution of this my earthly tabernacle, and translation of the inhabiting spirit, into the merciful hands of the great God, Creator, Lord of heaven and earth, whom I have taken to be my God, in and with his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who is also over all God blessed for ever, and my dear and glorious Redeemer and Lord: With and by the Holy Spirit of grace, my light, life, and joy; relying entirely and alone, upon the free and rich mercy of the Father, vouchsafed on the account of the most invaluable sacrifice and perfect righteousness of the Son, applied unto me according to the Gospel covenant by the Spirit, for the pardon of the many seriously repented sins of a very faulty fruitless life, and the acceptance of my person, with my sincere, though weak desires and endeavours to do him service in this world, especially as my calling, wherewith he graciously honoured me, did more particularly require, in promoting the welfare and salvation of the precious souls of men.

ERRATA.

Vol. ii. p. 30. l. 3. (head of Chap. II.) *for* correct *read* corrupt.
—— iii. p. 12. l. ult. *for* given being had *read* had given being.
—— vii. p. 551. *dele the last line.*

A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE REDEEMER'S DOMINION

OVER

The Invisible World,

AND

THE ENTRANCE THEREINTO BY DEATH.

SOME PART WHEREOF WAS PREACHED ON OCCASION OF

THE DEATH

OF

JOHN HOGHTON, Esq.

ELDEST SON OF SIR CHARLES HOGHTON, OF HOGHTON-TOWER, IN THE COUNTY OF LANCASTER, BARONET.

TO THE

MOST DESERVEDLY HONOURED,

AND

TRULY HONOURABLE,

SIR CHARLES AND THE LADY MARY

HOGHTON,

OF HOGHTON-TOWER.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace, &c.

YOU will, I know, count it no indecency, that, when God hath so nearly, many years ago, joined you in relation, in affection, and now so lately, in the affliction equally common to you both, I do also join your names on the same paper, and make this solemn address to you together.

It is by the inestimable favour of Heaven, that the mutual interest God hath given you in each other, as it obligeth, doth also (as I have great reason to hope) effectually dispose and enable you, not only to partake in the comforts, but in the sorrows, that are common to you both, so as that the former shall be greatly increased, and the latter proportionably allayed and mitigated, thereby. Thus is the advantage of your conjugal state both *represented* in God's designation, and *apprehended* in your own experience.

And you are to consider the blessing of God herein as having a peculiarity in it, not being extended to all so related, neither to all that were great in this world, nor to all that were pious and good. Great worldly felicity hath been rendered insipid and spiritless; and great calamities, much more bitter, by the want of a meet mutual helpfulness between such relations.

A great and good man (Job 1. 1.) in his time; a prince, as he is thought to have been, in his country; " a man that was perfect, and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;" when he lost not *one*, not the *eldest*, only, of his numerous offspring, (as you have,) but, all at once, seven sons and three daughters, with such concomitant circumstances of accumulated afflictions, as, blessed be God, are not in your case; and might now expect some relief from his other self, the nearest and most inward companion of his life, and partaker of his joys and sorrows; all the succour he had from her, was an impious endeavour to provoke and irritate his spirit; that taunting scoff, " Dost thou still retain thy integrity?" and that horrid advice, " Curse God and die." Whereas that rational, religious, soul-composing thought, " Shall we receive good at the hand of

God, and shall we not receive evil?" was deeply fixed in the mind of the one: how much more effectually relieving had it been, if it had circulated between both the relatives; and they had alternately propounded and enlarged upon it to one another!

With you, I cannot doubt, it hath been so; and that you have made it your business to improve your mutual interest, not to aggravate, but to alleviate your affliction to each other.

You have, both of you, great occasion and obligation to revolve and recount to each other the many good things you have received at the hand of God, to mitigate what there is of evil in this dispensation.

Both of you have sprung of religious and honourable families, favoured of God, valued and beloved in the countries where he had planted them. They have been both, seats of religion, and of the worship of God: the resorts of his servants: houses of mercy to the indigent, of justice to the vitious, of patronage to the sober and virtuous, and of good example to all about them.

You were both dedicated to God early, and he gave early testimony of his accepting the dedication. He began with you both betimes, blessing your education, and owning you for his, by disposing and forming your spirits to own betimes the God of your fathers. He hath blessed you indeed, adding the spiritual blessings in heavenly things, to your many earthly comforts. This, Jabez might mean, not content with a common blessing; and the more probably, from the acceptance he found, 1 Chron. 4. 9, 10. God granted his request, as Solomon's, when his request was as little vulgar, 1 Kings 3. 10.

You both concurred in the dedication of *this* your son, as in the rest of yours; and I doubt not with great seriousness, you covenanted with God in Christ, to be his God. And if he enabled you to be in good earnest herein, even that was of special grace and favour, and ought to come into the account of the many good things you have received of God's hand; as offering to God willingly, did in the estimate of David, when the oblation was of a meaner kind, 1 Chron. 29. 14.

But then you ought to consider, what the import and meaning was of that your covenant, wherein you accepted God in Christ to be the God of your son; and dedicated him to God through Christ to be his. Was it not absolute, and without limitation, that God should be a God to him entirely and without reserve, and that he should be his absolutely, and be disposed of by him at his pleasure? Otherwise, there was a repugnancy and contradiction in the very terms of your covenant. To be a God to him! Is not *God*, the name of a Being incapable of limitation? Doth it not signify infinite, unlimited power and goodness? To be a God to any one, therefore, under restriction, is to be *a God* to him, and *no* God. And so to covenant with God, can neither have sincerity in it, nor good sense. He can be under no restraint in the exercises of his power and goodness towards any to whom he vouchsafes to be their God in covenant; but what he is pleased to lay upon himself, which must be from his own wisdom and good pleasure, to which in covenanting we refer ourselves; with *particular* faith—in reference to what he hath expressly promised; and with *general*—that all shall be well, where his promise is not express. But from ourselves, nothing can be prescribed to him. He must be our all, or nothing; in point of enjoyment, as our sovereign, all-comprehending good; in point of government, as our sovereign, all-dis-

posing Lord. So we take him, in covenanting with him for ourselves and ours: for he so propounds and offers himself to us. If we accept and take him accordingly, there is a covenant between him and us; otherwise we refuse him, and there is no covenant. When he promises, as to his part, he promises his all; to be God all-sufficient to us; to be ours in all his fulness, according to our measure and capacity: we are not straitened in him, but in ourselves. He undertakes to be to us, and do for us, all that it belongs to him, as a God, to be and do. To give us grace and glory, (Ps. 84. 11.) about which, there can be no dispute or doubt: they are always and immutably good; and to withhold from us no good thing: here, are comprehended, with the former, inferior good things, about which, because they are but mutably, and not always good, there may be a doubt, whether now and in present circumstances, they will be good for us, or not. And now, it belongs to him, as he is to do the part of a God to us, to judge and determine for us, (for which he alone is competent, as being God only wise, and otherwise he were not God all-sufficient,) and not to leave that to us, who are so apt to be partial and mistaken in our judgment.

But when he makes his demand from us, of what we on our part are to be, and do, he demands our all, absolutely; that we surrender ourselves and ours, whatsoever we are and have, to his pleasure and disposal, without other exception or restriction than by his promise he hath laid upon himself.

Nor are we to think it strange there should be this difference, in the tenour of his covenant, between his part and ours. For we are to remember, that the covenant between him and us is not as of equals. He covenants as God; we, as creatures: He, according to the universal, infinite perfection and all-sufficiency of a God; we, according to the insufficiency, imperfection, and indigency of creatures.

These things were, I doubt not, all foreknown, and I hope considered, by you, when you so solemnly transacted with God, concerning this your son; wherein you could not but then take him for your God, as well as his God. It needs now only to be applied to the present case; and it manifestly admits this application, namely, That this his disposal of him, in taking him now up to himself, to be glorified by him, and to glorify him in the heavenly state, was a thing then agreed upon by solemn covenant, between God and you. It was done by your own virtual and unretracted consent. The substance of the thing was agreed to expressly; that God should be his God, and finally make him happy and blessed in himself. But if you say, that you would only have had his complete blessedness yet a while deferred; I will only say, Could you agree with that God whose he was, and whose you are, about the substance of so great a transaction; and now differ with him about a circumstance? And besides, all circumstances must be comprehended in your agreement. For, taking him to be your God, you take him to be supreme Disposer in all things, and his will to be in every thing the rule and measure of yours; which you have expressly consented to as often as you have prayed, either in the words, or after the tenour, of that prayer, wherein our Lord hath taught us to sum up our desires, and represent the sense of our hearts.

But besides the duty that is, both by his law, and by covenant-agreement, owing to God, it is also to be considered as a high dignity put upon you, to be the covenanted parents of a glorified son; a matter of

greater boast, than if you could say, " Our son" (to repeat what I formerly wrote) " is one of the greatest princes on earth !"

How far should Paganism be outdone by Christianity, which exhibits to our view death abolished, and life and immortality brought to light, by Jesus Christ, in the gospel ! 2 Tim. 1. 10. Which sets before us all the glories of the other world in a bright representation ! Which, if we believe, that faith will be to us, the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not, Heb. 11. 1. Thus, though you saw not the kind reception and abundant entrance of this son of your delights into the everlasting kingdom, it will yet be a thing evident to you, and your faith will render it a great and most substantial reality. Pagans had but obscure glimmerings of such things; and in such afflicting cases, when they did occur, comparatively lank and slender supports, yet such as were not to be despised.

Should I transcribe what I find written in way of consolation, by Plutarch to Apollonius, upon the loss of a son, you would see what would give both instruction and admiration. I shall mention some passages. He praises the young person deceased, for his comeliness, sobriety, piety, dutifulness towards parents, and obligingness towards friends; he acknowledges that sorrow, in the case of losing such a son, hath (φυσικην ἀρχην) *a principle in nature*, and is of the things that are (ουκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν) *not in our power*, or which we cannot help; that to be destitute of it is neither possible nor fit; that an apathy, or insensibleness, in such a case, is no more desirable than that we should endure to have a limb, a part of ourselves, cut or torn off from us, without feeling it. But yet he affirms, that immoderate sorrow, upon such an occasion, is (παρα φύσιν) *preternatural*, and hath a pravity in it, and proceeds from a misinformed mind; that we ought in any such case to be neither (ἀπαθεῖς, nor δυσπαθεῖς) *unaffected*, nor *ill affected*. He tells his friend a story (the meaning whereof is more considerable to us, than the credit of it, as perhaps it was to him) concerning two Grecian youths, Cleobis and Biton, whose mother having a duty to perform in the temple of Juno, and the mules not being at hand, at the instant when she expected them to draw her chariot thither, they most officiously drew it themselves; with which act of piety, their mother was so transported, that she made her request to Juno, on their behalf, that if there were any thing more desirable unto mortals than another, she would therewith reward her sons; who, thereupon, threw them into a sleep, out of which they awoke no more: thereby signifying, that death was the best gift that could be bestowed upon persons of such supposed piety as they !

To which purpose, is what he relates concerning the death of Euthynous, an Italian referred to, towards the close of the following discourse, son and heir to the ample estate of Elysius, a person of principal dignity among the Terinæans; to whom, anxiously inquiring of diviners concerning the cause of this calamity, the spectre of his son, introduced by his father, appeared in his sleep, shewing him certain Greek verses, the sum whereof was, Thy inquiry is foolish.

The minds of men are vain, Euthynous rests by a kindly decreed death,
Because his living longer, had neither been good for him nor his parents.

He afterwards adds, A good man, when he dies, is worthy, not so much of lamentations, as of hymns and praises.

He animadverts upon the aptness of parents to quarrel with any circumstances of a son's death, be they what they will. If he die abroad, then the aggravation is, that neither the father nor the mother had opportunity to close his eyes; if at home, then, How is he plucked away, even out of our hands!

He gives divers memorable instances, of sundry great persons, bearing, with strange composure of mind, the same kind of affliction. I omit what he wrote to his wife on their loss of a child: as also to recite many very instructive passages out of Seneca writing to Marcia, on the same account, by way of consolation for her loss of a son, and to Helvia, for her loss in the same kind; to Polybius, having lost a near relation, &c.

But we have the oracles of God, and do, too commonly, less need to receive instruction from Heathens than deserve to be reproached by them; that there is so frequent cause for the complaint of that ancient worthy (Hierom.) in the Christian church; *Non præstat Fides quod præstitit Infidelitas—The infidelity of Pagans performs greater things than the faith of Christians.* Their sedate temper, their mastery over turbulent passions, may in many instances shame our impotency and want of self-government, in like cases.

For who of them have ever had, or could have, so great a thing to say, as is said to us by the word of the Lord, for this very purpose, "that we may not sorrow concerning them that are asleep, even as others who have no hope: for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say to you," (and it is said by the forementioned authority; the Lord himself having revealed it to this great apostle, and directed him to say it,) "that we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," 1 Thess. 4. 13—18.

I have transcribed these few verses, that they might readily appear to present view. And because all their efficacy, and all our advantage by them, depend upon our believing them, let us closely put the question to ourselves, Do we believe them, or do we not? The apostle seems to design the putting us upon this self-reflection, by inserting the supposition, *If we believe;* as if he should say, This will effectually do the business of allaying all our hopeless sorrow. For if we believe that one fundamental truth, (and therefore let us see whether we do or no,) of Christ's dying and rising again, it will draw such a train of consequences, all tending to fill our souls with a vital joy, as will leave no place for undue sorrow any longer. That faith will be still urging and carrying us forward, will make us wholly intent upon prospect and expectation. What are we now to look for upon such a foundation, so firmly laid, and fully believed? If we believe that Jesus died! He did not submit to die without a design; and his rising again, speaks him Master of his design; and that he hath it now entirely in his power. He died not for himself, but for them he was to redeem! And being now risen again, what must become of them? All that follows, is now matter of glorious triumph!

If Plato, Plutarch, or Seneca, had but once had such a revelation from heaven as this, and that ground to believe it, that we have, how full would their writings have been of it! How had they abounded in lofty paraphrases upon every period and word of it!

The faith of such things would surely make a truly Christian heart so earnestly press forward in the expectation of the great things still to ensue, as to leave it little leisure for retrospection. And this is the source of all our intemperate sorrow, in such a case as this—our framing to ourselves pleasing suppositions of being as we were, with such and such friends and relatives about us as we heretofore enjoyed. As hope of what is future and desirable, feeds our joy; so memory of good things past, doth our sorrow. In such a case as this, which the apostle here speaks to, the decease of our dear friends and relatives fallen asleep, we are apt to look back with a lingering eye upon the former state of things, and to say, as he, *O mihi preteritos—O that God would recal for me the years that are gone over!* —Or, as in sacred language, "O that I were as in months past—when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me; when my children were about me!" Job 29. 1—6.

What pleasant scenes do we form to ourselves afresh, of past things, on purpose to foment present sorrow! And whether we have that design or no, we are more prone to look back to former things which we have known, than forward to future which we know not; especially, if the further we look back, the less we find of trouble intermingled in our former course. A smooth and pleasant path, we would go over again, if reason and the necessity of affairs, do not recal us, and urge us forward.

And so, Sir, might you find matter for a very copious and not ungrateful recollection, to call over again, and revolve in your thoughts the pleasures of your youth, (more innocent than of many others,) when you were incumbered with no cares, entertained with various delights of one sort and another, in this or that pleasant seat of your parents. But how remote is it from you, upon consideration, to wish yourself back into your juvenile state and circumstances! How much more generous and God-like a pleasure is it, to be doing good in the world, and still to abound therein; to go forward, and do still more and more!

And, Madam, who could have a more pleasant retrospect upon former days than you, recounting your Antrim delights, the delight you took in your excellent relations, your garden-delights, your closet-delights, your Lord's-days'-delights! But how much greater a thing is it to serve God in your present station; as the mother of a numerous and hopeful offspring; as the mistress of a large family; where you bear your part, with your like-minded consort, in supporting the interest of God and religion, and have opportunity of scattering blessings round about you!

But our business is not recurring, or looking back. God is continually calling us forward. Time is a stream running on towards the vast ocean. Tending backward, is vain striving against the stream. And as it is the course and method of nature, of providence, and grace, to tend forward, and carry us from less, to greater things in this world; so do all these conspire to carry us on (because our ἀκμὴ, *our highest pitch*, cannot be here) to yet far greater things in the greater world. Of which vast world, it is the design of the following discourse to give you some account; though, God knows, it is but a very imperfect one. Such as it is, if God only make it an occasion to you, of fixing your minds and hearts upon that

mighty theme, you will find it easy and pleasant to you to amplify upon it and enlarge it to yourselves. And thereby, through God's blessing, I doubt not, arrive to a fulness of satisfaction concerning this late dispensation, which hath a gloom upon it; but is in very deed only gloomy on one side, namely, downwards, and towards this wretched world, this region of sorrow and darkness: but on the side upwards, and towards that other world which casts its lustre upon it, its phasis and appearance will be altogether bright and glorious. And the more you look by a believing intuition into that other world where our blessed Redeemer and Lord bears rule in so transcendent glory, the more will you be above all the cloudy darkness of this event of providence towards yourselves and your family. Herein, your perusal of this very defective essay may be of some use to you. And I reckoned it might be of more lasting and permanent use to you, and yours after you, and to as many others into whose hands it might fall, as a little book, than as one single sermon.

You will, however, I doubt not, apprehend in it the sincere desire to assist you in this your present difficult trial; followed by the faithful endeavour of,

Most honoured in the Lord,

Your very respectful and obliged servant,

In him,

And for his sake,

JOHN HOWE.

May 17, 1699.

THE

REDEEMER'S DOMINION,

&c.

Rev. 1. 18.

———*And have the keys of hell* (Hades, *or* the unseen world) *and of death.*

THE peculiar occasion of this present solemnity, (I mean, that is additional to the usual business of the Lord's-day,) may be somewhat amusing to narrower and less considering minds; namely, That I am now to take notice to you of (what the most would call) the premature or untimely death of a most hopeful young gentleman, the heir of a very considerable family, greatly prepared by parts and pious sentiments, and further preparing by study and conversation, to be useful to the age, cut off in his prime, when the mere shewing him * to the world had begun to raise an expectation, in such as knew him, of somewhat more than ordinary hereafter from him, his future advantageous circumstances being considered, of which you will hear further towards the close of this discourse.

Nor did I know any passage in the whole sacred volume, more apt to serve the best and most valuable purpose in such a case, than the words now read; none more fitted to enlarge our minds, to compose them, and reduce to a due temper even theirs who are most concerned, and most liable to be disturbed, or to instruct us all how to interpret and comment aright upon so perplexing and so intricate a providence as this, at the first and slighter view, may seem unto us.

In order whereto, our business must be to explain and apply this most weighty and awful saying.

First, For the *explication*, these three things are to be inquired into.

* Ostendunt terris hunc tantum, fata nec ultra esse sinunt—The gods have just shewn him to the world, and permitted him to be seen no more. *Virg.*

I. Who it is that claims and asserts to himself this power here spoken of.

II. What it is about which this claimed power is to be conversant.

III. What sort of power it is that this emblematical expression signifies to belong to him.

I. Who it is that claims the power here spoken of; where the inquiry is not so much concerning the person that makes this claim, which all the foregoing context puts out of question to be our Lord Christ; but touching the special notion and capacity wherein he claims it, and according whereto it must be understood to belong to him.

And whereas he is described by very distinct titles and attributes, promiscuously interwoven in the preceding verses of the chapter, namely, that sometimes he is introduced speaking in the style of a God; (as *v.* 8, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. And again, *v.* 11, I am Alpha and Omega;) but that sometimes he is represented in the form of a man, and accordingly described even from head to foot, and said to appear in the vision that exhibits him as one like the Son of man, that we might certainly understand him so to be, *v.* 13—16. And such things said of him as are incident to a mortal man, the shedding of his blood, *v.* 5, and that he was dead, *v.* 18, *former part.* Yea and expressions of this different import intermingled, that we might know it was the same Person who was continued to be spoken of under these so vastly different characters; as, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, *v.* 17, 18. We may thereupon very reasonably conclude that he is not here to be conceived under the one notion or the other, neither as God nor as man, separately or exclusively of each other; but as both together, as Θεάνθρωπος, as *God-man*, under which conjunct notion, he receives and sustains the office of our Redeemer, and Mediator between God and man.

This will enable us the more clearly to answer the third inquiry, when we come to it, concerning the kind of that power which is here claimed; and which, because there can be no doubt of the justice of his claim, we are hereby taught to ascribe to him.

For the management whereof, we are also hence to reckon him every way competent; that he was *par negotio*, that it was not too big for him; no expressions being used to signify his

true humanity, but which are joined with others, as appropriate to deity. And that nothing therefore obliges us to narrow it more than the following account imports, which we are next to inquire about; namely,

II. The large extent of the object about which the power he here claims is to be conversant; that is, *Hades* (the unseen world) and death.

The former of these, we with a debasing limitation, and, as I doubt not will appear, very unreasonably, do render *hell*.

The power belonging to Christ, we are elsewhere taught to conceive, is of unspeakably greater latitude. And here we are not taught to confine it to so vile and narrow limits, as this translation gives it. All things in the context conspire to magnify him, and, agreeably hereto, to magnify his dominion. When therefore the apparent design is to speak him *great*, that he should only be represented as the Jailor of devils, and their companions, is, to me, unaccountable; unless a very manifest necessity did induce to it.

From the word ἅδης—*hades*, there can be no pretence for it. Though it ought to be extended, it is by no means to be restrained to that sense: which as it is the most ignoble, so it will appear but a very small, minute, part of its signification; whether we consider the literal import, or the common use, of the word.

Literally, it signifies only what we see not, or what is out of our sight. But as the word of which it is compounded signifies also to know, as well as to see, it may further signify, that state of things which lies without the compass of our knowledge, even out of the reach of our mental sight; or concerning which, though we are to believe what is revealed, we cannot immediately or distinctly know it; and in reference whereto, therefore, we are to walk by faith, not by sight, 2 Cor. 5. 7.

And the common use of the word has been very agreeable hereto, with writers of all sorts; that is, to signify indefinitely the unseen world; or the state of the deceased out of our world, who are, consequently, gone out of our sight, whether they were good or bad; so as not peculiarly to signify hell, or any place or state of torment, only.

It were easy to abound in quotations to this purpose, if it were either needful or proper in a discourse of this nature.

What I intend in this kind, I shall only set down on the bye in the margin, upon which they that will may cast their

eye; * that the discourse be not interrupted as to others, that either have no need to be informed in this matter, having known as much before as can be now told them; or no inclination to be diverted from their present purpose in reading; ap-

* And here it may suffice to take notice, that Greek writers, poets, philosophers, historians, and other writers, that have made only occasional mention of this word ἅδης, or of the words next akin to it, ἀΐς, or ἀϊδής, or lexicographers, that have purposely given an account of it, from Greek authors, that must be supposed best to understand the use of words in their own tongue; generally such as have not been engaged in a controversy, that obliges men usually to torture words to their own sense, or to serve the hypothesis which they had espoused; have been remote from confining this, or the cognate words, to that narrow sense as only to signify a place or state of torment for bad men, but understood it as comprehending, also, a state of felicity for the pious and good.

For such as have been concerned in interpreting this or other like words with reference to the known and famous controversy, which I need not mention, their judgments must weigh according to the reputation they are of with the reader.

The Greeks, no doubt, best understood their own language. And among them can we think that Homer in the beginning of his first *Iliad*, when he speaks of the many brave souls of his heroes, those ἴφθιμοι ψυχαὶ, which the war he is describing sent into the invisible regions, ἀϊδι προΐαψεν, that he ever dreamt they were all promiscuously dispatched away to a place of torment? Not to mention other passages where he uses the word ἅδης to the same purpose. Divers others of the Greek poets are cited by several ready to our hands, with which I shall not cumber these pages. That one is enough, and nothing can be fuller to our purpose, which is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus Stromata, liber 5. as well as by sundry others, and ascribed to the comic Diphilus, though by others to Philemon.

Καὶ γαρ καθ' ἅδην δύο τριβους νομίζομεν
Μίαν δικαίων, κατέραν ἀσεβῶν ὁδόν.

In *hades* we reckon there are two paths, the one of the righteous, the other of the wicked; plainly shewing that *hades* was understood to contain heaven and hell. Plato, when in his *Phædo* he tells us that he that comes into *hades*, ἀμύητος, καὶ ἀτέλεστος, not initiated and duly prepared, is thrown into Βόρβορος, *a stinking lake*, but he that comes into it fitly purified, shall dwell with the gods; as expressly signifies *hades* to include the same opposite states of misery and felicity. In that dialogue called *Axiochus*, though supposed not to be his, written by one that sufficiently knew the meaning of such a word, we are told that when men die they are brought into the Πεδίον ἀληθείας, the field of truth, where sit judges that examine τίνα βιον, what manner of life every one lived while he dwelt in the body, that they who, while they lived here, were inspired by a good genius or spirit, go into the region of pious men, having before they came into *hades* been purified. Such as led their lives wickedly are hurried by furies up and down chaos, in the region of the wicked. In the third Book *de Republica*, Plato blames the poets that they represent the state of things in *hades* too frightfully, when they should μᾶλλον ἐπαινεῖν,

prehending that what is generally told them, only concerning the usual signification of a word, is not said without some ground. And let texts of Scripture be consulted about that, how *hades*, and the correspondent word *sheol*, in the old Testament, are used there. If we take the help of interpreters, the impartial reader is to judge of their fidelity and ability who go our way. *

praise it rather. *Plutarch de Superstitione* brings in Plato speaking of *hades*, as a person, or a God, *Dis*, or *Pluto*, as they frequently do, and says he is φιλάνθρωπος, *benign or friendly to men;* therefore not a tormentor of them only. *Cælius Rhodigin.* quotes this same passage of Plutarch, and takes notice that our Saviour speaks of the state of torment by another word, not *hades*, but *Gehenna;* which sufficiently shews how he understood it himself.

And whereas there are who disagree to this notation of this word, that makes it signify *unseen*, as some will fetch it from the Hebrew, and go as far back as Adam in their search, alleging for this the authority of an old Sibyll, others will have it go for ἀηδὴς, and signify as ἀτερπὴς, *unpleasant;* nothing is plainer than that this other is the common notion, which (though fancy hath not a greater dominion in any thing than in etymology) would make one shy of stretching invention to find how to differ from the generality. Therefore Calepin, upon this word, tells us that the Greek grammarians do, against the nature of the *Etymon*, (which plainly enough shews what they understood that to be,) generally direct its beginning to be written with the *spiritus asper*, but yet he makes it signify *obscure*, or *not visible*. And though Plato is endeavoured to be hooked into the deriving it from Adam by a very far fetch; yet it is plain that his calling it τόπον ἀδηλον, in a place before referred to, shews he understood it to signify *invisible:* and so lexicons will commonly derive it *(Vulgo*, says *Cælius Rhodig.)*. But its extensiveness, as comprehending a state of happiness, is our principal concern, which way (as we might shew by many more instances) the common stream carries it. Pausanias in his ΑΡΚΑΔΙΚΑ, speaking of Hermes (according to Homer) as Διὸς διάκονον, and that he did lead souls υπὸ τον ἀδην, could not be thought to mean that they were then universally miserable. Sextus Empiricus is an authority good enough for the meaning of a Greek word. When writing against mathematicians, he tells us, though by way of objection, all men have a common notion περι των ἐν ἀδῃ, (using the genitive with ἐν, as Homer, and others do, another word, house or abode, in the dative, being understood,) and yet, as to the thing, he afterwards distinguishes poets' fables, and what, from the nature of the soul itself, all have a common apprehension of. As also Diogenes Laertius has the same phrase, mentioning the writings of Protagoras, who, he says, wrote one book περι των ἐν ἀδῃ, using the genitive, as here, after ἐν, as hath been usual, on the mentioned account. And though his books were burnt by the Athenians, because of the dubious title of one of them concerning the gods, so that we have not opportunity to know what his opinion of *hades* was, we have reason more than enough, to think he understood it not of a state of torment only for evil spirits.

* Primate Usher's judgment may be seen in his answer to the Jesuits'

Upon the whole, it being most evident that hell is but a small and mean part of what is signified by *hades*, it will be very unreasonable to represent or conceive of the power here ascribed to our Lord, according to that narrow notion of it. And would be a like incongruity, as if, to magnify the person of highest dignity in the court of a mighty prince, one should say, "He is the keeper of the dungeon."

The word itself, indeed, properly taken, and according to its just extent, mightily greatens him. It is as much as to say, His dominion is of unknown limits; such as no eye can measure. We think with a sort of veneration, of what is represented as too big for our knowledge. We have a natural awe and reverence for unsearchable darkness. But in the mean time we herein suffer a just diminution of ourselves, that when our inquiry stops, and can proceed no further, it being but a very little part of the universe that lies within our compass, having tired our inquiring eye and mind; upon all the rest we write, *Hades;* call it *unseen*, or *unknown*. And because we call it so, God himself, in reference to us, calls it so too; it being his way, (as is observed by that noted Jew, Maimonides,) speaking to men, to use the tongue of the children of men, to speak to them in their own language, and allow them to coin their own words: which at first they often do very oc-

challenge, that this word properly signifies the other world, the place or state of the dead—so that heaven itself may be comprehended in it. Grotius, on Luke 16. 23, makes *hades* most certainly to signify a place withdrawn from our sight; spoken of the body, the grave; of the soul, all that region wherein it is separate from the body. So that as Dives was in *hades*, so was Lazarus too, but in separate regions: for both paradise, and hell, or, as the Grecians were wont to speak, *Elysii*, and *Tartara*, were in *hades*. You may have in him more quotations from the poets, the sense of the Essenes from Josephus, and passages from divers of the fathers to the same purpose. Dr. Hammond's mind was the same, copiously expressed on Matth. 11. 23; but differs from Grotius, in ascribing to Philemon the iambicks above recited, which the other gives to Diphilus. Dr. Lightfoot is full to the same purpose, on the 4th Article of the Creed. And though Bellarmin will have this word always signify *hell*, (which if it do, with *sheol* the correspondent word; Jacob desired to go to hell to his son, as Dr. Hammond argues;) Camero, as good a judge, thinks, except once, it never does. If any desire to see more to this purpose with little trouble to themselves, let them peruse Martinius's lexicon on the word *infernus*, or *infernus*. I could refer them to many more whom I forbear to mention.

Only if any think in some or other text of Scripture this word must signify *hell* only, since it is of that latitude as to signify *heaven* in other places, an impartial view of the circumstances of the text must determine whether there it be meant of the one, or the other, or both.

casionally; nor, as to this, could they have a fairer or a more urgent occasion, or that is more self-justifying, than in one word to say of that other world, that it is *hades*, or *invisible*, when that is truly all that they have to say, or can have any immediate notice of about it.

It hath therefore its rise from ourselves, and the penury of our knowledge of things; and is at once both an ingenuous confession, with some sort of modest cover, and excuse of our own ignorance: as with geographers, all that part of this globe which they cannot describe, is *terra incognita, unknown region;* and with philosophers, such phænomena in nature as they can give no account of, they resolve shortly and in the most compendious way into some or other occult quality, or somewhat else, as occult.

How happy were it, if in all matters that concern religion, and in this, as it does so, they would shut up in a sacred venerable darkness, what they cannot distinctly perceive; it being once by the undeceiving word expressly asserted, that it is, without therefore denying its reality, because they clearly apprehend not what it is.

With too many their religion is so little, and their pride and self-conceit so great, that they think themselves fit to be standards; that their eye or mind is of a size large enough to measure the creation, yea, and the Creator too. And by how much they have the less left them of mind, or the more it is sunk into earth and carnality, the more capable it is of being the measure of all reality, of taking the compass of all being, created and uncreated. And so that of the philosopher takes place in the worst sense that can be put upon it; "to see darkness is to see nothing." All is nullity that their sense reaches not. *Hades* is with such, indeed, empty, imaginary darkness; or in plainer English, there is neither heaven nor hell, because they see them not.

But we ought to have the greater thoughts of it, not the less, for its being too big, too great, too glorious, for our present view: and that it must as yet rest as to us, and so let it rest a while, under the name of *Hades*, the unknown dominion of our great Lord; according to that most express account he at his ascension gave of the existence of both parts together, that less known to us, and that more known, Matt. 28. 18. All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.

That death is added, as contained also within the limits of our Lord's dominion, doth expressly signify his custody of

the passage from this visible world to the invisible. And as he commands the entrance into each distinct part of *hades*, the *invisible world*, consisting of both heaven and hell, so he hath power over death too, which is the common outlet from this world, and the passage unto both.

But it withal plainly implies his very absolute power over this visible world of ours also: for it signifies he hath the power of measuring every one's time here, and how long each inhabitant of this world shall live in it. If it belong to him to determine when any one shall die, it must by consequence belong to him to assign the portion and dimensum of time that every one shall live. Nor is there any conceivable moment in the time of any one's life, wherein he hath not this power of putting a period by death thereunto, at his own pleasure. He is therefore signified to have the power of every man's life and death at once: and the power of life and death is very high and great power. He therefore herein implicitly claims, what is elsewhere expressly ascribed to him, Rom. 14. 7—9. None lives to himself, (that is, *de jure*, no man should,) and no man dieth to himself: for "whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living."

In sum, here is asserted to him a dominion over both worlds; this in which we live, and that into which we die, whether the one or the other part of it. And so in reference to men, who once have inhabited this world, the sense of this text, and that we are insisting on, is the same. Though *hades* is of vastly larger extent than only to be the receptacle of such as have lived here; it having also, in both the parts of it, innumerable inhabitants who never had a dwelling assigned them in this world of ours at all.

But thus far we have the vast extent of our Lord Christ's dominion competently cleared to be the proper intendment of this text; and that it never meant so faint and minute a representation of it, as only to make him Keeper of the bottomless pit; though of that also he hath the key, as we shall further take notice: but are now to inquire of what will take up less time.

III. The kind of that power over so vast a realm, or manifold realms, signified by this emblematical expression, of *having the keys*, &c.

Every one knows that the keys are insignia; some of the

tokens of power; and according to the peculiarity of the object, may be of divine power.

The Jews, as some writers of their affairs say, appropriate the keys of three, others of four things to God only: of life, or the entrance into this world; of the rain, or the treasures of the clouds; of the earth, say some,* as of the granary of corn; and of the grave: "Of which," says one of their own,† "the Holy, Blessed One hath the keys of the sepulchres in his hand," &c. And as we may be sure he admits thither, so he emits from thence; and, as he says, "In the future age, the Holy, Blessed One will unlock the treasures of souls, and will open the graves, and bring every soul back into its own body," &c.

Nor is this key of the vast *hades*, when it is in the hand of our Redeemer, the less in the hand of the Holy, Blessed One; for so is he too. But it is in his hand as belonging to his office of Mediator between God and man, as was before said. And properly, the phrase signifies ministerial power, being a manifest allusion to the common usage, in the courts of princes, of intrusting to some great minister the power of the keys; as it was foretold of Eliakim, (Isa. 22.) that he should be placed in the same high station in Hezekiah's court, wherein Shebna was, of whom so severe things are there said; and that the key of the house of David should be laid upon his shoulder, &c. v. 20—22. And the house of David being a known type of the house or church of God, and he himself of Christ, who as the Son, hath power over the whole house, according to this typical way of speaking, our Lord is said (Rev. 3. 7.) to have the key of David, to open so as none can shut, to shut so as none can open; that is, to have a final, decisive power in all he doth, from which there is no appeal.

Nor could any thing be more congruous, than that having the keys of the celestial house of God, the heavenly palace of the Great King, the habitation of his holiness and glory, (in which are the everlasting habitations, the many mansions, the places prepared for his redeemed,) he should also have the keys of the terrestrial Bethel; which is but a sort of *portal*, or *vestibulum*, to the other: *the house of God, and the gate of heaven.* And as he is implied to have the keys of this introductive, preparatory kingdom of heaven, (as the keys of the king's palace, where is the throne or seat of government; and the keys of the kingdom must mean the same thing,) when he is said to give them to the apostle Peter, and the other apostles: this was but a prelude, and a minute instance of his power of

* Weems. † Pirke. R. Eliezer. Edit. per G. H. Vorst. C. F.

those keys of *hades*, and of the glorious heavenly kingdom itself contained therein, which he was not to delegate, but to manage himself immediately in his own person.

If moreover he were signified by the angel, (Rev. 20. 1.) who was said to have the key of the bottomless pit; that also must import a power, though great in itself, yet very little in comparison of the immense *hades*, of which he is here said to have the keys. So remote is it, that the power ascribed to him *there*, should be the measure of what he here asserts to himself: and the difference must be vastly greater than it is possible for us to conceive, or parallel by the difference between having power over the palace, and all the most delightful and most spacious territories in the vastest empire of the greatest prince, and only having power over a dungeon in some obscure corner of it: which, for the great purposes whereto all this is to be applied, we can scarcely too much inculcate.

Secondly, And to such *application* let us now, with all possible seriousness and intention of spirit, address ourselves. This will consist in sundry inferences or deductions, laying before us some suitable matter, partly of meditation, partly of practice: the former whereof are to prepare and lay a ground for the latter.

1. Divers things we may collect, that will be very proper for our deep meditation; which I shall propose not as things that we can be supposed not to have known before, but which are too commonly not enough thought on or considered.

And here we shall somewhat invert the order wherein things lie in the text, beginning with what is there latter and lower, and thence arising, with more advantage, to what is higher and of greater concernment: as,

1. That men do not die at random, or by some uncertain, accidental bye stroke, which, as by a slip of the hand, cuts off the thread of life; but by an act of divine determination, and judgment, which passes in reference to each one's death. For as the key signifies authority and power, the turning this key of death, which gives a man his exit out of this world, is an authoritative act. And do we consider in what hand this power is lodged? We cannot but apprehend every such act is the effect of counsel and judgment.

What philosophers are wont to discourse of fortuitous events in reference to rational agents, or casual, in reference to natural, must be understood only with relation to ourselves, and signifies our own ignorance of futurities, but can have no place in the all-comprehending Mind, as if any thing were a contin-

gency unto that. As for them that live as if they thought they came into this world by chance, it is very natural for them to think they shall die and go out of it by chance too, but when and as it happens. This is worse than Paganish blindness; for besides what from their poets, the vulgar have been made to believe concerning the three fatal Sisters, to whom they ascribed no less than deity concerned in measuring every one's life, the grave discourses which some of them have written concerning providence, and its extent to the lesser intermediate concerns of life, much more to that their final great concern of death, will be a standing testimony against the too prevailing Christian scepticism (they ought to excuse the solecism who make it) of this wretched age! But such among us as will allow themselves the liberty to think, want not opportunity and means by which they may be assured, that not an imaginary, but real Deity is immediately and constantly concerned in measuring our time in this world. What an awful thought is this! And it leads to a

2. Inference. That it is a great thing to die. The Son of God, the Redeemer of man, hath an immediate presidency over this affair. He signalizes himself by it, who could not suppose that he should be magnified by a trifle! We slightly say, Such a one is dead! Consider the matter in itself, and it is great. A reasonable soul hath changed states! An intelligent spirit is gone out of our world! The life of a gnat, a fly, (those little *automata*, or self-moving things,) how admirable a production is it! It becomes no man to despise what no man can imitate. We praise the pencil that well describes the external figure of such an *animalculum*, such a little creature; but the internal, vital, self-moving power, and the motion itself, what art can express! But a human life, how important a thing is it! It was one of Plato's thanksgivings, that God had made him a man! How careful a guard hath God set over every man's life, fencing it by the severest law! "If any man shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" and how weighty is the annexed reason! "For in the image of God he made man." This then highly greatens this matter. He therefore reserves it wholly to himself, as one of his peculiarities, to dispose of such a life! "I am he that kills and makes alive." We find it one of his high titles—"The God of the spirits of all flesh." He had what was much greater to glory in, that he was "the Father of spirits," indefinitely spoken. When he hath all the heavenly regions, the spacious *hades*, peopled with such inhabitants "whose dwelling is not with flesh," and,

for vast multitudes of them, never was, who yet, looking down into this little world of ours, this minute spot of his creation, and observing that here were spirits dwelling in flesh, he should please to be styled also the God of those spirits, signifies this to be with him too an appropriate glory, a glory which he will not communicate farther than he communicates Godhead; and that he held it a divine right to measure the time unto each of them of their abode in flesh, and determine when they shall dislodge.

This cannot be thought on aright, without a becoming, most profound reverence of him on this account. How sharp a rebuke is given to that haughty prince, "The God in whose hands thy breath is, hast thou not glorified," Dan. 5. 23. That would prepare the way, and we should be easily led on, were we once come to think with reverence, to think also with pleasure of this case, that our life and every breath we draw, are under such a divine superintendency. The holy psalmist speaks of it with high complacency, as the matter of his song, that he had a God presiding over his life. So he tells us he would have each νυχθήμερον, *day and night*, composed not more of *night* and *day*, than of *prayer* and *praise* directed to God under this notion, as the God of his life, Ps. 42. 8. And he speaks it not grudgingly, but as the ground of his trust and boast, Ps. 31. 14, 15.—"I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hand." That this key is in the hand of the great *Emmanuel—God with us*, will be thought on with frequency, when it is thought on with delight.

3. Our life on earth is under the constant strict observation of our Lord Christ. He waits when to turn the key, and shut it up. Through the whole of that time, which, by deferring, he measures out to us, we are under his eye as in a state of probation. He takes continual notice how we acquit ourselves. For his turning the key at last, is a judicial act; therefore supposes diligent observation, and proceeds upon it. He that hath this key, is also said in the next chapter, (*v.* 18.) to have eyes like a flame of fire. With these he observes what he hath against one or another, (*v.* 20.) and with most indulgent patience gives a space of repentance, (*v.* 21.) and notes it down if any then repent not, as we there also find. Did secure sinners consider this, how he beholds them with a flame in his eye, and the key in his hand, would they dare still to trifle? If they did apprehend how he, in this posture, stands over them, in all their vain dalliances, idle impertinencies, bold

adventures, insolent attempts against his laws and government, presumptuous affronts of his high authority; yea, or but in their drowsy slumberings, their lingering delays, their neglects of offered grace; did they consider what notice he takes how they demean themselves under every sermon they hear, in every prayer wherein they are to join with others, or which, perhaps, for custom's sake, they put up alone by themselves; how their hearts are moved, or unmoved, by every repeated call that is given them to turn to God, and get their peace made by application of their Redeemer's reconciling blood; in what agonies would they be, what pangs of trembling would they feel within themselves, lest the key should turn before their great work be done!

4. Whatsoever ill designs by this observation he discovers, it is easy to him to prevent. One turn of this key of death, besides the many other ways that are obvious to him, disappoints them all, and in that day all their thoughts perish. It is not therefore from inadvertency, indifferency, or impotency, but *deep counsel*, that they are permitted to be driven on so far. He that sitteth in the heavens laughs, and he knows their day is coming. He can turn this key when he will.

5. His power as to every one's death cannot be avoided, or withstood. The act of this key is definitive, and ends the business. No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, Eccl. 8. 8. It is in vain to struggle, when the key is turned; the power of the keys, where it is supremely lodged, is absolutely decisive, and their effect permanent and irrevocable. That soul therefore for whose exit the key is turned, must thereupon then forthwith depart, willing or unwilling, ready or unready.

6. Souls that go out of this world of ours, on the turn of this key, go not out of being. He that hath this key of death, hath also the key of *hades*, a key and a key. When he uses the former, to let them out from this, he uses the latter, to give them their inlet into the other world, and into the one or the other part of it; into the upper or the lower *hades*, as the state of their case is, and doth require.

Our business is not now with Pagans, to whom the oracles of God are unknown. If it were, the best and wisest of them who so commonly speak of souls' going into *hades*, never thought of their going no whither; nor therefore that they were nothing. They had reasons, then, which they thought cogent, that induced them, though unassisted with divine re-

velation, to conclude they survived their forsaken bodies. And what else could any unbribed understanding conclude or conceive? When we find they have powers belonging to them, which we can much more easily apprehend capable of being acted without help from the body than by it, we are sure they can form thoughts, purposes, desires, hopes; for it is matter of fact, they do it; and coherent thoughts, and thoughts arising from thoughts, one from another: yea, and thoughts abstracted from any thing corporeal, the notions of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil, with some agreeable resolves; thoughts quite above the sphere of matter, so as to form a notion of the mind itself of a spiritual Being, as unexceptionable a one as we can form of a body: yea, of an original self-subsistent Mind and Spirit, the Former and Maker of all other. It is much more apprehensible, since we certainly know that all this is done, that it is done without any help of the body, than how flesh, or blood, or bones, or nerves, or brains, or any corporeal thing, should contribute to such methods of thinking, or to any thought at all. And if it can be conceived that a spirit can act without dependence on a body, what should hinder but we may as well conceive it to subsist and live without such dependence? And when we find this power of thought belongs to somewhat in us that lives, since the deserted carcass thinks not; that the body lives not of itself, or life is not essential to it, for life may be retired and gone, and it remain, as we see it does, the same body still; how reasonable is it to suppose, that the soul to which the power of thought belongs, lives of itself, not independently on the first cause, but essentially, so as to receive life and essence together from that cause, or life included in its essence, so as that it shall be the same thing to it, to be, and to live. And hereupon how obvious is it to apprehend that the soul is such a thing as can live in the body, which when it does, the body lives by it a precarious, borrowed life; and that can live out of the body, leaving it, when it does so, to drop and die.

These sentiments were so reasonable, as generally to prevail with the more deeply-thinking part of mankind, philosophers of all sorts, (a few excepted, whose notions were manifestly formed by vicious inclination,) in the Pagan world, where was nothing higher than reason to govern. But we have life and immortality brought to light in the gospel, (2 Tim. 1. 10.) and are forewarned by it that these will be the measures

of the final judgment, to give eternal life at last to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, Rom. 2. 7. To the rest, indignation, and wrath, &c. (*v.* 8.) because there is no respect of persons with God, *v.* 11. As supposing the discovery of another world, even by natural light, much more by the addition of supernatural, to be so clear, as that the rule of the universal judgment, even for all, is most righteously to be taken from hence, and that there is nothing but a resolution of living wickedly, to be opposed to it.

It is also no slight consideration, that a susceptibleness of religion should, among the creatures that dwell on earth, be so appropriate and peculiar to man, and (some rare instances excepted) as far diffused as human nature; so as to induce some very considering men, of the ancients as well as moderns, both Pagans and Christians, to think *religion* the more probable specifying difference of man than *reason*. And whence should so common an impression be, but from a cause as common? Or how can we avoid to think that this signature upon the soul of man, a capacity of religion, should be from the same hand that formed the spirit of man within him, and that a natural religiousness, and human nature itself, had the same Author? But who sees not that religion, as such, hath a final reference to a future state? He was no despicable writer, though not a Christian, that positively affirmed hope towards God to be essential to man; and that they that had it not, were not partakers of the rational nature. *

It is so much the more a deplorable and monstrous thing, that so many, not only against the light of their own reason, but of divine revelation, are so industrious to unman themselves: and having so effectually in a great degree done it really and in practice, aim to do it in a more compendious way notionally and in principle too; and make use or shew of reason to prove themselves not to be reasonable creatures; or to divest themselves of the principal dignity and distinction of the rational nature: and are incomparably herein more unnatural than such as we commonly count felons upon themselves, who only act against their own bodily life, but these against the much nobler life of their soul; they against the life of an individual, these against their own whole species at once. And

Philo Judæus, Quod deter. potiori insid. soleat, ὡς τῶν μὴ ἐλπιζόντων περὶ Θεὸν, λογικῆς φύσεως ὃ μεμοιραμένων.

how deplorable is their case, that count it their interest to be in no possibility of being happy! when yet their so great dread of a future state, as to urge them upon doing the most notorious violence to their own faculties to rid themselves of it, is a very convictive argument of its reality: for their dread still pursues and sticks close to them. This shews it lies deep in the nature of things which they cannot alter. The terrible image is still before their eyes; and their principal refuge lies only in diverting, in not attending to it. And they can so little trust to their own sophistical reasonings against it, that when they have done all they can, they must owe what they have of ease and quiet in their own minds, not so much to any strength of reason they apprehend in their own thoughts, as in not thinking. A bold jest may sometimes provoke others' laughter, when it does not extinguish their own fear. A suspicion *a formido oppositi---fear of what is before them*, will still remain: a misgiving that they cannot nullify the great *hades*, pull down the spacious fabric of heaven, or undermine the profound abyss of hell, by a profane scoff. They will in time discern the difference between the evanid passion of a sudden fright, that takes its rise from imagination, and the fixed dread which is founded in the reason of things; as one may between a fright in a dream, and the dread of a condemned criminal, with whom, sleeping and waking, the real state of his case is still the same.

Nor are the things themselves remote or unconnected; God's right to punish a reasonable creature that has lived in contempt of him, and his own reasonable apprehension hereof, or his conscience both of the fact and desert. They answer as face to face, as the stamp on the seal, and the impression on the wax. They would fain make their reason a protection against their fear, but that cannot serve both ways: the reason of the thing lies against them already, and there cannot be an eternal war between the faculty and the object. One way or other the latter will overpower the former, and draw it into consent with itself; either by letting it see there is a just, true cause of fear, or, assisted by divine grace, by prevailing for the change of the sinner's course. Whereupon that troublesome fear, and its cause, will both upon the best terms cease together. And that what has been proposed to consideration under this head, may be the more effectually considered, to this blessed purpose, I add that,

7. The discovery of the invisible world, and the disposal of affairs there, have a most encouraging aspect upon this world:

for both the discovery and the disposal are by our blessed Redeemer, in whom mercy and might are met in highest perfection. How fragrant breathings of grace, how glorious a display of power, are there in what he here says: "Fear not! I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and I am alive for evermore, Amen. And I have the keys of *hades* and of death." He hath opened the celestial *hades* to our view, that it might be also open to our safe entrance and blissful inhabitation. He who was dead, but liveth, and had made his victorious triumphant entrance before us, and for us; he who had overcome him that had the power of death, conquered the gigantic monster at the gate, gained the keys, and designed herein their deliverance from the fear of death, who were thereby subject to bondage; (Heb. 2. 14, 15.) he who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel; (2 Tim. 1. 10.) it is *he* who bids us lift up our eyes, and behold the heavens opened, and himself standing at the right hand of God. The horrid, infernal *hades*, he hath discovered too, only that we might fear and shun it. But yet more distinctly consider, why doth he here represent himself under this character, "He that liveth and was dead," but that he might put us in mind of that most convictive argument of his love, his submitting to die for us; "Greater love hath no man:" and that he might at once put us out of doubt concerning his power, that he yet survives, and is sprung up alive out of that death, victorious over it. How amiable is the representation of such power in conjunction with such love! The same person having a heart so replenished with love, a hand so armed with power, neither capable of *unkind* design, nor unable to effect the *most kind*. Behold him in this representation! Who would not now fall at his foot and adore? Who would hesitate at resigning to him, or be appalled at his disclosure of this unknown world?

Do but consider him who makes the discovery, and who would not expect from him the utmost efforts of love and goodness? From him who is the Brightness of his Father's glory, and the express Image of his person! His essential Image, who is Love! From him who came into this wretched world of ours, full of grace and truth! And who could not have come but by the inducement of compassion to our miseries. From him who knows all things, and whose eye penetrates into every recess of the vast *hades*: all his own empire, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; but who only knows not to deceive: who hath told us, in his Father's house

are many mansions, and if it were not so, would have told us that, John 14. 2. From him into whose mouth guile never entered, but into whose lips grace was poured, and is poured out by them; so that the ear that hath heard him hath borne him witness, and filled with wonder those that heard the gracious words which came out of his mouth. Who hath told us all concerning that unseen world, that in this our present state it was fit for us to know; and enough, in telling all that will be his followers, that where he is, there he will have them be, John 17. 24.

And consider the manifest tendency of the discovery itself. What doth it mean or tend to, but to undeceive miserable mortals, whom he beholds from his high throne mocked with shadows, beguiled with most delusive impostures, and easily apt to be imposed upon? Foolish, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; feeding upon ashes, and wearying themselves for very vanity; sporting themselves in the dust of this minute spot of earth: wasting their little inch of time, wherein they should prepare for translation into the regions of unseen glory. To these he declares he hath formed a kingdom for all that covet to mend their states, and that his kingdom is not of this world; that for such as will be of this kingdom, he will provide better, having other worlds, the many heavens, above all which he is ascended, at his disposal, Eph. 4. 10. But they must seek this kingdom and the righteousness of it in the first place, and desist from their care about other things. He counsels and warns them not to lay up their treasure on earth, but in heaven; and to let their hearts be there with their treasure. And what can withstand his power, who, having been dead, liveth victorious over him that had the power of death, and is alive for evermore, possessed of an eternal state of life?

And have we not reason to expect the most equal and most benign disposal of things in that unseen world, when he also declares, I have the keys, rightful authority, as well as mighty power, to reward and punish? None but who have a very ill mind can fear from him an ill management. He first became capable of dying, and then yielded himself to die, that he might obtain these keys for gracious purposes. He had them before to execute just vengeance, as he was originally in the form of God, and without robbery equal with God; an equal sharer in sustaining the wrong that had been done by apostate rebels, and an equal sharer in the right of vindicating it.

But that he might have these keys to open the heavenly *hades* to reduced apostates, to penitent, believing, self-devoting sinners, for this, it was necessary that he should put on man, be found here in fashion as a man, take on him the form of a servant, become obedient to death, even that servile punishment, the death of the cross, Phil. 2. 7, 8. For this he is highly exalted into this power, that every knee might bow to him, in hope of saving mercy, v. 9, 10, compared with Isa. 45. 22, 23. He had the keys without this, of the supernal *hades*, to shut out all offenders, and of the infernal, to shut them up for ever. But that he might have them to absolve repenting believers, and admit them into heaven, and only to shut up in hell implacable enemies—for this he must die, and live again. He was to be slain and hanged on a tree, that he might be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sin, Acts 5. 30, 31. That to this intent he might be Lord of the dead and the living, he must both die and rise, and live so as to die no more, Rom. 14. 9. These keys for this purpose, he was only to have upon these terms. He had a right to punish as an offended God, but to pardon and save as a mediating, sin-expiating God-man.

But as he was to do the part of a Mediator, he must act equally between the disagreeing parties: he was to deal impartially on both sides. To render back entire to the injured Ruler of the world his violated rights, and to obtain for us his forfeited favour, as entire. And he undertook therefore, when as a sacrifice he was to be slain, to redeem us to God by his blood, Rev. 5. 9. To give him back his revolted creature, holy, pure, subject, and serviceable, as by his methods he shall be at last; and procure for him pardon, acceptance, and eternal blessedness.

When therefore he was to do for us the part of a Redeemer, he was to redeem us from the *curse* of the law, not from the *command* of it; to save us from the *wrath* of God, not from his *government*, Gal. 3. 13, 14. Rom. 8. 3, 4. Had it been otherwise, so firm and indissoluble is the connexion between our duty and our felicity, that the sovereign Ruler had been eternally injured, and we not advantaged. Were we to have been set free from the preceptive obligation of God's holy law, then most of all from that most fundamental precept, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, soul, might, and mind;" had this been redemption, which supposes only what is evil and hurtful, as that we are to be redeemed from? This were a strange sort of self-repugnant redemption, not from sin

and misery, but from our duty and felicity. This were so to be redeemed as to be still lost, and every way lost, both to God and to ourselves for ever. Redeemed from loving God! What a monstrous thought! Redeemed from what is the great active and fruitive principle; the source of obedience and blessedness; the eternal spring, even in the heavenly state, of adoration and fruition! This had been to legitimate everlasting enmity and rebellion against the blessed God, and to redeem us into an eternal hell of horror and misery to ourselves! This had been to cut off from the supreme Ruler of the world for ever, so considerable a limb of his most rightful dominion, and to leave us as miserable as everlasting separation from the Fountain of life and blessedness could make us.

When therefore our Lord Jesus Christ was to redeem us from the curse of the law, it was that the promised Spirit might be given to us, (Gal. 3. 13, 14.) who should write the law in our hearts: (Jer. 31. 33. Ezek. 36. 27.) fulfil the righteousness of it in us, by causing us to walk after his dictates, according to that law; regenerating us, begetting us after God's image, and making us partakers of a Godlike nature. So we through the law become dead to the malediction and curse of it, that we may live to God more devoted lives than ever, Gal. 2. 19. Thus is God's lost creature given back to him with the greatest advantage also to itself.

With this design it is apparent our Lord redeemed us, and by his redemption acquired these keys. Nor are we to doubt, but in the use of them, he will dispense exactly according to this just and merciful design. And what a perverse distorted mind is that, which can so much as wish it should be otherwise! namely, That he should save us to the eternal wrong of him that made us, and so as that we should be nothing the better; that is, that he should save us without saving us!

And hath this no pleasant comfortable aspect upon a lost world, that he who hath these keys will use them for such purposes? that is, to admit to eternal bliss, and save to the uttermost, all that will come to God by him: (not willing to be everlastingly alienated from the life of God;) because he ever lives to make intercession, or to transact and negotiate for them, (as that word signifies,) and that in a rightful way, and even by the power of these keys!

8. That there must be some important reason why the other world is to us unseen, and so truly bears the name of *Hades*. This expresses the state of the case as in fact it is, that it is a world lying out of our sight, and into which our dim and

weak eye cannot penetrate. That other state of things is spoken of therefore as hidden from us by a vail. When our Lord Jesus is said to have passed into the heavens, (Heb. 4. 14.) he is also said to have entered into that within the vail; (Heb. 6. 19, 20.) alluding to that in the temple of Solomon, and before that, in Moses's tabernacle; but expressly signifying, that the holy places into which Christ entered, not those made with hands, which were the figure of the true, but heaven itself, filled with the glorious presence of God, where he appears for us, (Heb. 9. 24.) is also vailed from us. As also the glory of the other state is said to be a glory as yet to be revealed, Rom. 8. 18. And we are told, (Job 26. 9.) the great God holdeth back the face of his throne; and above, *v.* 6, it is represented as a divine prerogative, that *sheol*, which is there groundlessly rendered *hell*, the vast *hades*, is only naked before him, lies entirely open to his view, and therein the dark and horrid part of it, *destruction*, by which peculiarly must be meant *hell*, is to him without a covering, not more hidden from his eye.

Which shews this to be the divine pleasure; so God will have it be, who could have exposed all to common view, if he had pleased.

But because he orders all things according to the counsel of his will, (Eph. 1. 11.) we must conceive some weighty reason did induce hereto, that whatsoever lies beyond this present state of things should be concealed from our immediate view, and so come *uno nomine—under one name*, to be all called *Hades*. And if the reason of God's conduct, and the course of his dispensation herein, had been equally hidden, as that state itself is, it had been a bold presumption to inquire and pry into it; modesty and reverence should have restrained us. But when we find it holds a manifest agreement with other parts of his counsel, that are sufficiently revealed; and that the excellency of the Divine Wisdom is most conspicuous, and principally to be beheld and admired, in ordering the apt congruities and correspondencies of things with each other, and especially of the ends he proposes to himself, with the methods and ways he takes to effect them; it were very great oscitancy, and an undutiful negligence, not to observe them, when they stand in view, that we may render him his due acknowledgments and honour thereupon.

It is manifest that as God did not create man, at first, in that which he designed to be his final state, but as a probationer, in a state of trial, in order to a further state; so when he

apostatized and fell from God, he was graciously pleased to order for him a new trial, and put him into the hands of his merciful Redeemer, who is intrusted with these keys, and with the power of life and death over him, to be managed and exercised according to the terms plainly set down and declared in his gospel. Wheresoever he is with sufficient evidence revealed and made known, men immediately come under obligation to believe in him; to intrust and commit themselves into the same hands; to rely upon the truth of his word in every thing he reveals, as the ground of their submitting to his authority in every thing he requires. What concerns their present practice, he hath plainly shewn them; so much as it was requisite they should pre-apprehend of future retributions, rewards and punishments, he hath revealed also; not that they should have the knowledge hereof by immediate inspection, but by taking his word. That as their first transgression was founded in infidelity, that they did not believe God, but a lying spirit against him; their first step in their recovery and return to God should be to believe him, and take his word about things they have themselves no immediate sight or knowledge of. This point was by no means to be quitted to the first apostates. As if God's saying to them, "If you transgress, you shall die, or go into *hades*," was no sufficient enforcement of the precept, unless he had given them a distinct view of the states of felicity or misery, which their obedience or disobedience would lead them into. This had been to give away the whole cause to the revolted rebels, and rather to confess error and oversight in the divine government, than impute fault to the impugners of it!

This being the state of the case, how unsuitable had it been to the design of this second trial to be made with men, to withdraw the vail, and let every one's own eyes be their informers of all the glories of the heavenly state! and hereupon proclaim and preach the gospel to them, that they should all partake herein, that would entirely deny themselves, come off from their own bottom, give themselves up absolutely to the interest, love, service, and communion, of their Redeemer, and of God in him! To fortify them against the assaults and dangers of their earthly pilgrimage by reversing that rule, The just shall live by faith; even that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; (Heb. 10. 38.—*ch.* 11. 1.) or by inverting the method, that in reference to such things we are to walk by faith, not by sight, (2 Cor. 5. 7.) and letting it be, We are to walk by sight, not

by faith! And that lest any should refuse such compliance with their great Lord, whole *hades* should be no longer so, but made naked before them, and the covering of hell and destruction be taken off, and their own eyes behold the infernal horrors, and their own ears hear the shrieks and howlings, of accursed creatures, that having rejected their Redeemer, are rejected by him. We are not here to consider, what course would most certainly effect their salvation, but what most became the wise holy God, to preserve the dignity of his own government, and save them too; otherwise almighty power could save all at once. As therefore we have cause to acknowledge the kindness and compassion of our blessed Lord, who hath these keys, in giving us for the kind, such notices as he hath, of the state of the things in *hades;* so we have equal cause to admire his wisdom, that he gives us not those of another kind, that should more powerfully strike the sense and amaze us more, but instruct us less; that continues it to be *hades* still, a state of things to us unseen as yet. As the case would have been on the other supposition, the most generous, noble part of our religion had been sullied or lost; and the trial of our faith, which is to be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, even upon this account; that they who had not seen him in his mean circumstances on earth, nor did *now* see him, amidst all the glories of his exalted state, yet *believing*, loved him, and rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 7, 8. This faith, and all the glorious trials of it, with its admirable achievements and performances, whereby the elders heretofore obtained so good a report, (Heb. 11. 2.) and high renown on earth, and which filled the world with wonder, had all vanished into obscurity and darkness; that is, if they had believed no more, or no greater things, than every man besides had the immediate view of by his own eye-sight.

And yet the trial had been greater, on another account, than the divine wisdom, in conjunction with goodness and compassion, thought fit ordinarily to put sincere Christians upon. For who could with any tolerable patience have endured longer abode on earth, after they should once have had the glory of the heavenly state immediately set in view before their eyes! especially considering, not so much the sufferings, as the impurities of their present state? What, for great reason, was a special vouchsafement to one apostle, was, for as great, to be common to all Christians. How great is the wisdom and mercy

of our blessed Lord in this partial concealment of our future state, and that while so much as is sufficient is revealed, there is yet an *hades* upon it, and it may still be said, It doth not yet appear what we shall be, 1 John 3. 2.

But as these majestic life-breathing words of our great Lord do plainly offer the things that have been mentioned, and many more such that might occur to our thoughts and meditation; so will they be thought on in vain, if they be not followed and answered by suitable dispositions and actions of heart and life. Therefore the further use we are to make of this great subject will be to lay down,

II. Divers correspondent things to be practised and done, which must also suppose dispositions and frames of heart and spirit agreeable thereto.

1. Let us live expecting a period to be ere long put to our life on earth. For remember, there are keys put into a great hand for this very purpose, that holds them not in vain. His power is of equal extent with the law he is to proceed by. And by that it is appointed for all once to die, Heb. 9. 27. Therefore as in the execution he cannot exceed, so he will not come short of this appointment: when that once shall be, it belongs to him to determine. And from the course we may observe him to hold, as it is uncertain to all, it can be very remote to none. How short is the measure of a span! It is an absurd vanity to promise ourselves that which is in the power of another. How wise and prudent a thing to accommodate ourselves composedly to his pleasure, in whose power we are; and to live as men continually expecting to die! There are bands of death out of which, when they once take hold, we cannot free ourselves. But there are also bands of life, not less troublesome or dangerous. It is our great concern to be daily, by degrees, loosening and disentangling ourselves from these bands; and for preventing the necessity of a violent rupture, to be daily disengaging our hearts from an insnaring world, and the too close embraces of an over-indulged body. Tell them resolutely, "I must leave you whensoever my great Lord turns the key for me; and I know not how soon that may be." It is equally unhappy and foolish to be engaged in the pursuit of an impossibility, or in a war with necessity; the former whereof cannot be obtained, the latter cannot but overcome. We owe thus much to ourselves, and to the ease and quiet of our own minds, to be reconciled, at all times, to that which may befal us at any time. How confounding a thing is surprisal by that which we regret and dread! How unaccountable and ignominious

must it be to pretend to be surprised with what we have so great reason always to expect, and whereof we are so oft forewarned! Is it no part of Christian watchfulness to wait for such an hour? Though that waiting all the days of our appointed time, mentioned Job 14. 14, refers to another change than that of death, namely, (as the foregoing and following verses shew,) that of the resurrection, yet it cannot but be equally requisite, upon a no less important reason. And the requests that the Lord would make us to know our end, and the measure of our days that we may know how frail we are, (Ps. 39. 4.) and that he would teach us so to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom, (Ps. 90. 12.) are equally monitory to the same purpose, as the most express precepts; as also the many directions we have to watch and wait for our Lord's appearance and coming are as applicable to this purpose. For whensoever his key opens our passage out of this world, and out of these bodies, *hades* opens too, and he particularly appears to us, in as decisive a judgment of our case, as his universal appearance and judgment will at last give for all. The placid agreement of our minds and spirits with divine determination, both as to the thing, and time, of our departure hence, will prevent the trouble and ungratefulness of being surprised; and our continual expectation of it, will prevent any surprisal at all. Let this then be an agreed resolution with us, to endeavour being in such a posture, as that we may be capable of saying, "Lord, whensoever thou shalt move thy key, and tell me this night, or this hour, I will require thy soul, thou shalt not, O Lord, prevent mine expectation, or ever find me counting upon many years' enjoyment of any thing this world can entertain me with."

In further pursuance hereof,

2. Be not over-intent on designs for this present world: which would suppose you to count upon long abode in it. Let them be always laid with a supposition, you may this way, even by one turn of this key, be prevented from bringing them about; and let them be pursued with indifferency, so as that disappointment even this way may not be a grievance. A thing made up of thought and design, as our mind and spirit naturally is, will be designing one way or other; nor ought we to attempt that violence upon our own natures, as to endeavour the stupifying of the intelligent, designing mind, which the Author of nature hath put into us. Only let us so lay our designs, as that how many soever we form that may be liable to this sort of disappointment, we may still have *one*

greater and more important, so regularly and surely laid, that no turn of this key shall be in any possibility to frustrate, but promote it rather. The design for the kingdom of God to be first sought, with his righteousness, (Matth. 6. 33.) or which is pursued by seeking glory, honour, and immortality, to the actual attainment of eternal life, (Rom. 2. 7.) may, if prescribed methods be duly observed, have this felicity always attending it, to be successfully pursued while we live, and effected when we die.

But this is an unaccountable vanity under the sun, that men too generally form such projects, that they are disappointed both when they do not compass them, and when they do. If they do not, they have lost their labour; if they do, they are not worth it. They dream they are eating, and enjoying the fruit of their labour; but they awake, and their soul is empty. And if at length they think of laying wiser and more valuable designs, the key turns, and not having fixed their resolution, and begun aright, they and all their thoughts, foolish, or more wise, perish together. Because there is a fit season for every fit undertaking, a time and judgment for every purpose, or a critical time, such as is by judgment affixed to every such purpose, (Eccl. 8. 6.) and because also men know not their time, (*ch.* 9. 12.) therefore their misery is great upon the earth, and as birds caught in a snare, they are snared in an evil time that falleth suddenly upon them. O miserable, miserable mortals! So are your immortal spirits misemployed and lost!

Their most valuable design for another world is seldom thought on in season; their little designs for this world they contrive and prosecute with that confidence, as if they thought the world to be theirs, and themselves their own, and they had no Lord over them. This rude insolence that holy apostle animadverts upon, of such as say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas they know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is their life? A vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," Jam. 4. 13—15. So much of duty and becoming behaviour is in the mean time forgotten, as to say, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that." This is to bear themselves as absolute masters of their own lives. How bold an affront to their sovereign Lord! They feel themselves well in health, strength, and vigour, and seem resolved it shall be a trial of skill who hath the power, or to whom the keys belong, till it come to the last irrefragable demonstration, that he changes their coun-

tenance, and sends them away; (Job 14. 20.) and then they go driven, plucked and torn away from their dwelling-place, rooted out of the land of the living, Ps. 52. 5.

But if any premonitory decays make them doubt the perpetuity of their own abode here, they somewhat ease their minds by the pleasure they take in thinking, when they have filled their own bellies, (Ps. 17. 14.) what they shall leave of their substance to their babes, and to them that shall come after. And "their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; and they call their lands after their own names, and their posterity approve their sayings," (Ps. 49. 11.) think and act as wisely as they. Thus they take upon them, and reckon that they for their time, and theirs after them, shall still dwell in their own. A wise thought! They are the owners, when another keeps the keys.

Several other things of like import I shall more lightly touch, that may be collected from what hath been already more largely said, and leave to be further enlarged upon in your own thoughts; and shall dilate more upon some other, as they are either more material, or less thought on by the most.

3. Be not prodigal of your time on earth, which is so little in your power. Because you are not to expect much, make the best use you can of your little. It is so precious a thing that it is to be redeemed: it is therefore too precious to be embezzled and trifled away. The connexion of those two precepts, (Eph. 5. 15, 16.) of walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, and that of redeeming the time, more than intimates, that to squander time is a foolish thing. Of the several sorts of things that we make ourselves, their shape and frame shew their use and end. Are we to make a less judicious estimate of the works of God? If we therefore contemplate ourselves, and consider what a sort of production man is, can we allow ourselves to think God made him a reasonable creature on purpose to play the fool? Or can we live as if we thought so, without reproaching our Maker? But whereas he who hath been the Author to us of such a nature, capable of improving a life's time in this world unto most valuable purposes, hath also been the Author of such a law, requiring us to redeem time; the reproach will be wholly turned off from him upon ourselves, and our consequent ruin be upon our own guilty heads. And he will find some among ourselves, who by the advantage only of the reasonable nature, common to us and them, that are instructors to us not to waste our days in vanity,

and will be witnesses against us if we so foolishly consume what we cannot command.

Some such have unanswerably reprehended the common folly of those that dread the thought of throwing away their whole life at once, that yet have no regret at throwing it all away by parcels and piece-meal. And have told us, *Neque quicquam reperit dignum, quod cum tempore suo permutaret— A wise man can find nothing of that value, for which to barter away his time.* Sen.

And we are to consider, that as we are reasonable creatures, we are accountable. That we are shut up in these bodies, as in work-houses. That when he that keeps the keys lets us out, we are to "receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether good or evil," 2 Cor. 5. 10. That it belongs to him that measures our time to censure it too, and the use we have made of it.

4. Let him be at once both great and amiable in our eyes, who hath so absolute power over us, and so gracious propensions towards us; who hath these keys, and who acquired them with so merciful intentions, even upon such terms as could not but signify the greatest compassion and good-will towards such as we.

Reconsider what hath been offered as matter of Meditation, to both these purposes. And now, hereupon, let us endeavour to have a correspondent sense inwrought into our hearts, and to bear ourselves towards him accordingly. The power and efficacy of whole Christianity depend upon this, and do very principally consist in it. What a faint, impotent, languishing thing is our religion, how doth it dwindle into spiritless, dead form, without it! The form of knowledge is nothing else but insipid, dead notion, and our forms of worship only fruitless, unpleasant formality, if we have not a vivid sense in our hearts both of his glorious greatness, and of his excellent loving-kindness. As much as words can signify towards the impressing such a sense into our hearts, we have in these words, uttered from his own mouth; so that he may say, as that memorable type of him once did, You may plainly perceive, "It is my mouth that speaketh to you," Gen. 45. "I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." And hereto he now sets his solemn ratifying seal, *Amen.* Wherewith he leaves us to pause, and collect, that thus it was brought about, that he could add, "And I have the keys of the vast *hades*, the whole *unseen world*, and of death."

And God forbid that, now, these words should be with us

an empty sound, or a dead letter! Let us cast in our minds what manner of salutation this should be! Doth the Son of God thus vouchsafe to bespeak miserable abjects, perishing, lost wretches? How can we hereupon but bow our heads and worship? What agitations of affection should we feel within! How should all our internal powers be moved, and our whole souls made as the chariots of Amminadib! What can we now be unwilling of, that he would have us be, or do? And as that, whereof we may be assured he is most willing?

5. Let us entirely receive him, and absolutely resign ourselves to him, as our Prince and Saviour. Who would not covet to be in special relation to so mighty and so kind a Lord? And can you think to be related to him upon other terms? And do you not know that upon these you may, when in his gospel he offers himself, and demands you? What can that mean but that you are to receive him, and resign yourselves? The case is now brought to this state, that you must either comply, or rebel. And what! rebel against him who hath these keys, who is in so high authority over the whole unseen world! Who is the Head of all principality and power, who is gone into the heavens, the glorious upper *hades*, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject to him! 1 Pet. 3. 22. We little know or can conceive, as yet, the several orders and distinctions of the celestial inhabitants, and their great and illustrious princes and potentates, thrones, dominions, and principalities and powers, that all pay him a dutiful and a joyful subjection and obedience. But do we not know God hath given him a name above every name? and that in his name, or at it, as it may be read, that is, in acknowledgment of his sovereign power, every knee must bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under earth, and all confess that he is Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father? And who art thou, perishing wretch! that darest dispute his title? Or that, when all the creation must be subject to him, wilt except thyself?

And when it cost him so dear, that his vast power might be subservient to a design of grace, and thou must at last be saved by him, or lost for ever, what can tempt thee to stand out against such power, and such grace?

If thou wert to gratify thy ambition, how glorious a thing is it to be a Christian! a subject, a devoted homager, to so mighty a Prince! If to provide against thy necessity and distress, what course can be so sure and successful, as to fly for refuge to so compassionate a Saviour? And dost thou not know there must

be, to this purpose, an express transaction between him and thee? Wonder he will condescend to it! To capitulate with dust and ashes! To article with his own creature, with whom he may do what he will! But his merciful condescension herein is declared and known. If there shall be a special relation settled between him and thee, he hath told thee in what way it must be, namely, by way of covenant-transaction and agreement, as he puts his people of old in mind his way was with them: "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine," Ezek. 16. 8. This I insist upon and press, as a thing of the greatest importance imaginable, and the least thought of; nor the strange incongruity animadverted on, that we have the seals of such a covenant among us; but the covenant itself slips through our hands. Our baptism soon after we were born, with some federal words then, is thought enough, as if we were a nation always minors. Whoever therefore thou art, that hearest these words, or readest these lines, know that the great Lord is express towards thee in his gospel proposal—"Wilt thou accept me for thine, and resign thyself as mine?" He now expects and requires thy express answer. Take his gospel as from the cross, or take it as from the throne, or as from both, it is the same gospel, interwoven of grace and authority; the richest grace, and the highest authority, at once inviting and requiring thee to *commit* and *submit* thyself unto him. Take heed lest his key turn before thou hast given thy complying answer, importing at once both thy trust and thy subjection.

Give not over pleading with thyself, with thy wayward stupid heart, till it can say to him, "Lord, I yield; thou hast overcome." Till with tender relentings thou hast thrown thyself at his feet, and told him, "Lord, I am ashamed, I am confounded within myself, that thou shouldest die upon a cross to obtain thy high power, and that thou art now ready to use it for the saving of so vile a miscreant as I: that when thou hast so vast an unknown world, so numberless myriads of excellent creatures in thy obedience, thou shouldest yet think it worth thy while to look after me; and that I should so long have withstood thy kind and gracious overtures and intendments! O forgive my wicked aversion! I now accept and resign."

And now this being sincerely done, with fulness of consent, with deep humility, with yearning bowels, with unfeigned thankfulness, and an inward complacency and gladness of heart;

6. Let your following course in this world be ordered agreeably hereto, in continued dependence and subjection. As

we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are to walk in him, Col. 2. 6. Take him according to the titles here given him, as Christ, a Person anoinned, authorized, qualified to be both Jesus, a Saviour, and so we are to walk, according to our first reception of him, in continual dependence on his saving mercy, and to be a Lord, or, as it is here exprest, with eminency, *the Lord*, so we are to walk in continual subjection to his governing power. Otherwise our receiving him, at first, under these notions, hath nothing in it but mockery and collusion.

But if his obtaining these keys, upon the terms here exprest, as having been dead, and now living, and having overcome death, as it is also Rom. 14. 9, did signify his having them for saving purposes, as it must, since for other purposes he had them sufficiently before; and if we reckon this a reasonable inducement to receive him, and commit and intrust ourselves to him as a Saviour, that he died, and overcame death; (for his grace in yielding to die, had not rendered him a competent object of trust, otherwise than in conjunction with his power in overcoming death, and so gaining into his hands these keys;) then, the same reason still remaining, how constant an encouragement have we to continue accordingly walking in him all our days! How potent an argument should it be to us, to live that life which we live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us? (Gal. 2. 20.) that is, inasmuch as having been crucified with him, (which is also there exprest,) we feel ourselves to live nevertheless; yet so as that it is not so much we that live, as Christ that liveth in us; who could not live in us, or be to us a spring of life, if he were not a perpetual spring of life in himself.

And consider, how darest thou live otherwise in this flesh, in this earthly house, whereof he keeps the keys, and can fetch thee out at his pleasure? When he hath warned thee to abide in him, that when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming, 1 John 2. 28. He will certainly then appear, when he comes to open the door, and dislodge thee from this flesh; (though there be here a further and final reference to another appearance and coming of his;) and if he then find thee severed and disjoined from him, (thy first closure with him not having been sincere, truly unitive and vital,) how terribly will he look! how confoundedly wilt thou look in that hour!

Neither hast thou less reason to live in continual subjection

to him, considering that as he died, and overcame death, that he might have these keys, so he now hath them, and thou art under his governing power. The more thou considerest his right to govern, the less thou wilt dispute it. When he was spoken of as a Child to us born, that he might become a Man of sorrows, and be sorrowful unto the death, and have all the sorrows of death come upon him, he is at the same time said to be the mighty God, and it was declared the government should be upon his shoulders, Isa. 9. 6. As he was the first begotten from the dead, both submitting to death, and conquering it, so he was the Prince of the kings of the earth, (a small part of his kingdom too,) his throne being founded on his cross, his governing power in his sacrifice; that is, the power whereby he so governs, as that he may also save; making these two things, the salving the rights of the Godhead, injured by sin, and delivering of the sinner from an eternal ruin, to agree and consist with one another.

What an endearing obligation is this to obey! That he will be the Author of eternal salvation to them that obey him! Inasmuch as, while our obedience cannot merit the least thing from him, yet his vouchsafing to govern us doth most highly merit from us. For he governs by writing his law in the heart, which makes our heart agree with the law; and by implanting divine love in us, which vanquishes enmity and disaffection, and virtually contains in itself our obedience, or keeping his commandments, John 14. 15, 23, and 1 John 5. 3. Therefore this government of his, over us, is naturally necessary to our salvation and blessedness, and is the inchoation and beginning of it; as our perfected love to God, and conformity to his nature and will, do involve and contain in themselves our complete and perfect blessedness, with which a continued enmity, or a rebellious mutinous disposition against God, is naturally inconsistent, and would be to us, and in us, a perpetual, everlasting hell.

There can therefore be no enthralling servitude in such obedience, but the truest liberty, that by which the Son makes us free indeed, John 8. 36. Yea a true sort of royalty: for hereby we come, in the most allowable sense, to live as we will, our will being conformed to the will of God. Whereupon that was no high extravagant rant, but a sober expression, "We are born in a kingdom; to serve God is to reign." *Seneca.*

And we know this to be the will of God, that all should honour the Son, as they honour the Father, John 5. 23. Herewith will the evangelically obedient comport with high com-

placency; accounting him most highly worthy that it should be so. Wherein therefore the Christian law seems strictest and most rigorous in the enjoined observance of our Lord Christ, herein we shall discern an unexceptionable reasonableness, and comply with a complacential approbation. And let us put our own hearts to it, and see that without regret or obmurmuration they can readily consent to the equity of the precept.

It is enjoined us, constructively at least, that because Christ died for us, when we were dead, quite lost in death, we that live, hereupon should settle this with ourselves as a fixed judgment, and upon that intervening judgment yield to the constraint of his love, so as henceforth no more to live to ourselves: God forbid we should henceforth be so profane! We must now for ever have done with that impious, unlawful way of living. What! after this, that we have so fully understood the state of our case, that we should be so assuming as ever again to offer at such a thing as living to ourselves, to make ourselves deities to ourselves; or to live otherwise than unto him who died for us, and rose again! 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. This is high and great, and may seem strict and severe. What! to have the whole stream of all the actions and aims, the strength and vigour of our lives, to be carried in one entire, undivided current unto him, and (as it must be understood, Gal. 2. 19.) to God in him, so as never more to live to ourselves, a divided, separate life apart from him, or wherein we shall not finally and more principally design for him! How high is his claim, but how equal and grateful to a right mind! With what a plenitude of consent (taking this into the account) is every divine command esteemed to be right in all things! So that whatsoever is opposite, is hated as a false way, Ps. 119. 128. And as the precept carries its own visible reason, the keeping of it carries its own reward in itself, Ps. 19. 11. And is it too much for him who bears these keys, and obtained them on such terms, and for such ends, to be thus affected towards him?

We are required, without exception, without limitation or reserve, whatsoever we do, whether in word or work, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Col. 3. 17.

Inquire we, Do our hearts repine at this law? Do not we? Does not this world owe so much to him? Why are we allowed a place and a time here? Why is not this world a flaming theatre? Is it not fit that all should know under whose government they live; by whose beneficence, under whose

protection, and in whose name they may act so or so, and by whose authority; either obliging; or not restraining them, requiring, or licensing them to do this or that? Does this world owe less to him, that bears these keys, than Egypt did to Joseph, when thus the royal word went forth in reference to him, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt?" How pleasant should it be to our souls, often to remember and think on that name of his which we bear, (Isa. 26. 8. Mal. 3. 16.) and draw in as vital breath, the sweet odours of it, Cant. 1. 3. Ps. 45. 6—11. John 20. 28. How glorious a thing should we count it, because he is the Lord our God, to walk in his name for ever and ever, as all people will walk every one in the name of their God, Mic. 4. 5. And then we shall account it no hard law, whatever we do, to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him, and for him; blessing God every day, that we are put by him under the mild and merciful government of a Redeemer. Then, we shall rejoicingly avow, as the apostle doth, (1 Cor. 9. 21.) That we are not without law to God, but under law to Christ.

Whereupon, when you find your special relation is thus settled and fixed unto the great Lord both of this present visible world, and of *hades*, or the invisible world, also by your solemn covenant with him, and evidenced by the continued correspondency of your heart and life, your dispositions and actions, thereunto:

7. Do not regret or dread to pass out of the one world into the other at his call, and under his conduct, though through the dark passage of death; remembering the keys are in so great and so kind a hand; and that his good pleasure herein is no more to be distrusted, than to be disputed or withstood. Let it be enough to you, that what you cannot see yourself, he sees for you. You have oft desired your ways, your motions, your removals from place to place, might be directed by him in the world. Have you never said, If thou go not with me, carry me not up hence? How safely and fearlessly may you follow him blindfold or in the dark any whither; not only from place to place in this world, but from world to world; how lightsome soever the one, and gloomy and dark the other may seem to you. Darkness and light are to him alike. To him, *hades* is no *hades*, nor is the dark way that leads into it to him an untrodden path. Shrink not at the thoughts of this translation, though it be not by escaping death, but even through the jaws of it.

We commonly excuse our aversion to die, by alleging that nature regrets it. But we do not enough consider, that in such a compounded sort of creature as we are, the word *nature* must be ambiguous. There is in us a sensitive nature that regrets it; but taking the case as it is now stated, can we think it tolerable, that it should be regretted by the reasonable nature? Unto which, if we appeal, can we suppose it so untrue to itself, as not to assert its own superiority? Or to judge it fit that an intelligent, immortal Spirit, capable of so great things in another world, should be content with a long abode here, only to keep a well-figured piece of flesh from putrefying, or give it the satisfaction of tasting meats and drinks that are grateful to it, for a few years? And if for a few, why not for many? And when those many were expired, why not for as many more? And the same reason always remaining, why not for always? The case is thus put, because the common meaning of this allegation, that nature regrets or abhors this dissolution, is not that they are concerned for their souls how it may fare with them in another world, which most men little mind or trouble themselves about; but that they are to have what is grateful to them in this world. And was this the end a reasonable spirit was made for, when, without reason, sense were alike capable of the same sort of gratifications? What law, what equity, what rule of decency, can oblige the soul of a man, capable of the society and enjoyments of angels, to this piece of self-denial, for the sake of his incomparably baser body? Or can make it fit that the nobler and more excellent nature should be eternally subservient to the meaner and more ignoble? Especially, considering that if, according to the case supposed, the two last foregoing directions be complied with, there is a sort of divine nature superadded to the whole human nature, that cannot but prompt the soul ennobled by it, to aspire to suitable, even to the highest, operations and enjoyments, whereof it is capable, and which are not attainable in this present bodily state.

And if there were still a dispute between nature and nature, it is enough that the great Lord of *hades*, and of this present sensible world too, will determine it. In a far lower instance, when the general of an army commands it upon an enterprise, wherein life is to be hazarded, it would be an ill excuse of a cowardly declining, to say, their nature regrets and dreads the adventure. The thing is necessary. Against what is so unavoidable as death, that is an abject mind that reluctates. *Miser est quicunque non vult, Mundo secum moriente, mori*—

He is a miserable man, who, while he sees the world dying around him, is himself unwilling to die. Sen. Tr.

Come, then, let us imbolden ourselves; and, when he brings the key, dare to die. It is to obey and enjoy him, who is our life and our all. Say we cheerfully each of us, Lord Jesus receive my spirit: into thy hands I commit it, who hast redeemed it.

8. Let us quietly submit to divine disposal, when our dear friends and relatives are by death taken away from us. For consider into what hands this affair is put, of ordering every one's decease, and removal out of this into the other world, and who hath these keys. It is such a one, whose right, if we use our thoughts, we shall not allow ourselves to dispute; or to censure his administration. His original right, is that of a Creator and a God. "For all things were created for him, and by him," Col. 1. 16. "And without him was nothing made that was made," John 1. 3. "The first and the last" to all things, Rev. 1. 17.

His supervening right was that of a Redeemer, as hath been already noted from this context, and as such he had it by acquisition, dying to obtain it, and overcoming death! "I am he that liveth and was dead." And then, as he elsewhere declares, by constitution, "All power is given me both in heaven and on earth," Matth. 28. 18. The word (ἐξουσία) imports *rightful power*. And who are we, or any relatives of ours, whom all the power of heaven and earth hath no right to touch? What exempt jurisdiction can we pretend ourselves to belong unto?

Or will we adventure to say, not denying his right, He did not use it well in this case? Who is more fitly qualified to judge, than he that hath these keys? And let this matter be yet more thoroughly discussed. What is it that we find fault with in the removal of this or that person, that was near, and delightful to us? Is it that he was to die at all? Or that he died so soon? If we say the former; do we blame the constitution appointing all men once to die, by which this world is made a portal to another, for all men, and whence it was necessary none should stay long in this, but only pass through, into that world wherein every one is to have his everlasting abode? Or is it that, when we think it not unfit this should be the general and common course, there should yet have been a particular dispensation for this friend or relation of mine?

Let the former be supposed the thing we quarrel at, and consider the intolerable consequences of the matters being other-

wise, as the case is with this apostate sinful world. Such as upon second, better-weighed thoughts, we would abhor to admit into our minds, even as the matter of a wish. What! would we wish to mankind a sinning immortality on this earth, before which a wise heathen * professed to prefer one day virtuously spent? Would we wish this world to be the everlasting stage of indignities and affronts to him that made it? Would we wish there should never be a judgment-day, and that all the wise and righteous counsels of heaven should be ranverst and overturned, only to comport with our terrene and sensual inclinations? Is this our dutifulness and loyal affection to our blessed Lord, the Author of our beings, and the God of our lives, whose rights and honours should be infinitely dearer to us than ourselves? Is it our kindness to ourselves, and all others of our kind and order, that are all naturally capable, and many, by gracious vouchsafement, fitly qualified, to enjoy a perfect felicity in another world, that we would have all together confined for ever to this region of darkness, impurity, and misery?

Or if it displease us, that our relatives are not, by some special dispensation, excepted from the common law of mortality, we would surely as much have expected an exemption ourselves; otherwise, our dying away from them, would make the so much regretted separation, as well as theirs from us. And what then, if we were required to draw up our petition, to put it into express words, to turn our wish for ourselves, and all our relatives and peculiar friends, into a formed, solemn prayer, to this effect, that we are content the law stand in force, that all the world should die, with only the exception of some few names; namely, our own, and of our kindred and more inward friends? What ashamed confounded creatures should we be upon the view of our own request! Should we not presently be for quelling and suppressing it, and easily yield to be nonsuited, without more ado? What pretence can we have not to think others as apt to make the same request for them and theirs? And if all the rest of the world shall die, would we and our friends dwell here alone, or would we have this world be continued habitable only on this private account, to gratify a family? And if we and our friends be holy, heavenly-minded persons, how unkind were it to wish to ourselves and them, when fit for the society of angels and blessed spirits above, a perpetual abode in this low earthly state! Would we not now,

* Cicero.

upon riper, second thoughts, rather be content that things should rest as they are, and he that hath these keys, use them his own way?

But if by all this we are put quite out of conceit with the desire of a terrestrial immortality, all that the matter finally results into is, that we think such a relative of ours died too soon. We would not have coveted for him an eternity on earth, but only more time. And how much more? Or for what? If we were to set the time, it is likely that when it comes, we should be as averse to a separation, if coexistent, then, as now; and so we revolve into the exploded desire of a terrestrial immortality back again at last. If we were to assign the reason of our desire, that would seem, as in the present case, a plausible one to some, which is mentioned by Plutarch in his consolation to Apollonius for the loss of his son, concerning another such case (as he instances in many) of one Elysius an Italian, whose loss of his son Euthynous was much aggravated by this, that he was a great heir. But what was said to that, there, and what is further to be said to any thing of that kind, I shall reserve to a more proper place.

It is a more weighty allegation, and of more common concernment, when a useful person is gone, and one very capable of becoming very eminently so. And this requires deeper consideration, and sundry things ought to be considered, in order to the quieting their minds, who are apt to behold such darker dispensations, in the course of providence, with amusement, and disturbance of spirit; that is, when they see persons of excellent endowments and external advantages beyond the most, cut off in their prime, while the world is cumbered with drones never likely to do good, and pestered with such as are like to prove plagues to it, and do great hurt and mischief to the age wherein they live: an ancient and not uncommon scruple to pious observers heretofore. "Wherefore," says holy Job, "do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight," *ch.* 21. 7, 8, when his seed was cut off before his eyes. And here let us consider,

(1.) That this world is in apostasy from God: and though he is pleased to use apt means for its recovery, he doth what he thinks fit herein of mere grace and favour, and is under no obligation to do all that he can. His dispensation herein must correspond to, and bear upon it, the impress of other divine perfections, his wisdom, holiness, justice, as well as grace. And for grace itself, whereas all since the apostasy lie together

in a fearful gulf of impurity and misery; and some, made more early sensible hereof than the most, do stretch out a craving hand, and cry for help. If now a merciful hand reached down from heaven take hold of them, and pluck them sooner out: is this disagreeable to the God of all grace, to make some such instances, and vouchsafe them an earlier deliverance; though they might, being longer delayed, be some way helpful to others, that continue stupid and insensible?

(2.) When he hath done much, in an age still obstinately unreclaimable, he may be supposed to let one appear, only with a promising aspect, and in just displeasure presently withdraw him, that they may understand they have forfeited such a blessing, to this or that country, as such a one might have proved.

(3.) This may awaken some, the more to prize and improve the encouragements they may have from such as remain, or shall spring up in their stead, who are gone, and to bless God that the weight of his interest, and of the cause of religion, doth not hang and depend upon the slender thread of this man's life. "The God of the spirits of all flesh" can raise up instruments as he pleases; and will, to serve his own purposes, though not ours.

(4.) He will have it known, that though he uses instruments, he needs them not. It is a piece of divine royalty and magnificence, that when he hath prepared and polished such a utensil, so as to be capable of great service, he can lay it by without loss.

(5.) They that are most qualified to be of greatest use in this world, are thereby also the more capable of blessedness in the other. It is owing to his most munificent bounty, that he may vouchsafe to reward sincere intentions, as highly as great services. He took David's having it in his heart to build him a house, as kindly as Solomon's building him one: and as much magnifies himself in testifying his acceptance of such as he discharges from his service here, at the third hour, as of them whom he engages not in it till the eleventh.

(6.) Of their early piety he makes great present use in this world, testifying his acceptance of their works, generally in his word, and particularly by the reputation he procures to them in the minds and consciences of such as were best able to judge, and even of all that knew them, which may be truly accounted a divine testimony, both in respect of the object, which hath on it a divine impress, and speaks the self-recom-

mending power of true goodness, which is the image of God, and in respect of the subject, shews the dominion God hath over minds, engaging not only good men to behold with complacency such pleasant, blooming goodness, correspondent to their own; but even bad men to approve in these others, what they entertain not in themselves. "The same things are accepted with God, and approved of men," Rom. 14. 18. "Thus being dead, they, as Abel, yet speak," Heb. 11. 4.

(7.) And it is a brighter and more unsullied testimony, which is left in the minds of men, concerning such very hopeful persons as die in their youth. They never were otherwise known, or can be remembered, than as excellent young persons. This is the only idea which remains of them. Had they lived longer, to the usual age of man, the remembrance of what they were in youth would have been in a great degree effaced and worn out by latter things; perhaps blackened, not by what were less commendable, but more ungrateful to the greater part, especially if they lived to come into public stations. Their just zeal and contestations against the wickedness of the age, might disoblige many, and create them enemies, who would make it their business to blast them, and cast upon their name and memory all the reproach they could invent. Whereas the lustre of that virtue and piety which had provoked nobody, appears only with an amiable look, and leaves behind nothing of such a person but a fair, unblemished, alluring and instructive example; which they that observed them might, with less prejudiced minds, compare with the useless, vicious lives of many that they see to have filled up a room in the world, unto extreme old age, either to no purpose, or to very bad. And how vast is the difference in respect of usefulness to the world, between a pious young gentleman dying in his youth, that lived long in a little time, untainted by youthful lusts and vanities, and victorious over them, and an accursed sinner of an hundred years old; (Isa. 65. 20.) one that was an infant of days, and though an hundred years old, yet still a child, that had not filled up his days with any thing of real value or profit to himself or others: so some very judicious expositors understand that text. And as Seneca aptly speaks, *Non est quòd quenquam propter canos aut rugas, putes diu vixisse. Non ille diu vixit, sed diu fuit—had nothing besides grey hairs, and wrinkles, to make him be thought a long liver;* but who might truly be said not to have *lived* long, but only to have *been* long, in the world. How sweet

and fragrant a memory doth the one, how rotten and stinking a name doth the other, leave behind him to survivors!

Therefore such very valuable young persons as are taken hence in the flower of their age, are not to be thought, upon that account, of usefulness to this world, to have lived in it that shorter time in vain.

They leave behind them that testimony which will turn to account, both for the glory of God's grace, which he hath exemplified in them, and which may be improved to the good of many who shall have seen that a holy life, amidst the temptations that the youthful age is exposed to, is no impracticable thing; and that an early death is as possible also to themselves.

But besides their no little usefulness in this world, which they leave, we must know,

(8.) That the affairs and concernments of the other world, whither they go, are incomparably greater every way, and much more considerable. And to this most unquestionable maxim must be our last and final resort, in the present case. All the perturbation and discomposure of mind which we suffer upon any such occasion, arises chiefly from our having too high and great thoughts of this world, and too low and diminishing thoughts of the other; and the evil must be remedied by rectifying our apprehensions in this matter. Because that other world is *hades*, unseen, and not within the verge of our sense, our sensual minds are prone to make of it a very little thing, and even next to nothing, as too many will have it to be quite nothing at all. We are concerned, in duty to our blessed Redeemer and Lord, and for his just honour, to magnify this his prefecture, and render it as great to ourselves as the matter requires, and as our very narrow minds can admit: and should labour to correct it as a great and too common fault, a very gross vulgar error, to conceive of persons leaving this world of ours, as if they hereby became useless; and, upon the matter, lost out of the creation of God. So is our fancy prepossessed and filled with delusive images, that throng in upon it through our unwary senses, that we imagine this little spot of our earth to be the only place of business, and all the rest of the creation to be mere vacuity, vast empty space, where there is nothing to do, and nothing to be enjoyed. Not that these are formed, positive thoughts, or a settled judgment, with good men, but they are floating imaginations, so continually obtruded upon them, from (what lies next) the objects of sense, that they have more influence to affect the heart, and

infer unsuitable, sudden, and indeliberate emotions of spirit, than the most formed judgment, grounded on things that lie without the sphere of sense, can outweigh.

And hence when a good man dies, elder or younger, the common cry is, among the better sort, (for the other do less concern themselves,) "O what a loss is this! Not to be repaired! not to be borne!" Indeed this is better than the common stupidity, not to consider, not "to take it to heart, when the righteous man perisheth, or is taken away." And the law of our own nature obliges and prompts us to feel and regret the losses which afflict us. But such resentments ought to be followed and qualified by greater thoughts, arising from a superior nature, that ought presently to take place with us, of the nobler employments which God calls such unto, "of whom this world was not worthy," Heb. 11. 38. And how highly his great and all-comprehending interest is to be preferred before our own, or the interest of this or that family, country, or nation, on earth!

And, at once both to enlarge and quiet our minds, on such occasions we should particularly consider,

[1.] The vast amplitude of the heavenly *hades*, in comparison of our minute spot of earth, or of that dark region, wheresoever it is, reserved for the just punishment of delinquents, according to such intimations as the holy Scriptures give us hereof; which being written only for the use of us on earth, cannot be supposed to intend the giving us more distinct accounts of the state of things in the upper world, than were necessary for us in this our present state.

But it is no obscure hint that is given of the spaciousness of the heavenly regions, when purposely to represent the divine immensity, it is said of the unconfined presence of the great God, that even heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him, 1 Kings 8. 27. 2 Chron. 6. 18. How vast scope is given to our thinking minds, to conceive heavens above heavens, encircling one another, till we have quite tired our faculty, and yet we know not how far short we are of the utmost verge! And when our Lord is said to have ascended far above all heavens, (Eph. 4. 10.) whose arithmetic will suffice to tell how many they are? Whose uranography to describe how far that is?

We need not impose it upon ourselves to judge their rules infallible, who, being of no mean understanding, nor indiligent in their inquiries, have thought it not improbable that there may be fixed stars within view, at that distance from our earth,

that if moveable in as swift motion as that of a bullet shot from a cannon, would be fifty thousand years in passing from one to the other.* But how much remoter that star may be from the utmost verge of the universe, is left altogether unimaginable. I have been told that a very ingenious artist going about, in exact proportions, to describe the orb or vortex to which our sun belongs, on as large a table as could be convenient for him to work upon, was at a loss to find a spot not too big, in proportion, for our earth, and big enough, whereupon to place the point, made very fine, of one foot of his compasses.

If any suspect extravagancy in our modern computations, let him take a view of what is discoursed to this purpose by a writer of most unexceptionable wisdom and sobriety, as well as most eminent sanctity, in his time.†

Now when the Lord of this vast universe beheld upon this little spot intelligent creatures in transgression and misery, that he did so compassionately concern himself for the recovery of such as should, by apt methods, be induced to comply with his merciful design; and appoint his own eternal Son to be their Redeemer, in order whereto, as he was God with God, he must also become Man, among men, one of themselves; and so, as God-man, for his kindness to some, be constituted universal Lord of all. Shall mere pity towards this world greaten it above the other?

But we are not left without ground to apprehend a more immediate reason for his being, as Redeemer, made Head and Lord of all those creatures that were the original inhabitants of the invisible world. For when it had been said, (Col. 1. 16.) that all things were created by him, not only the visible things

* Computation by the Hon. Francis Roberts, Esq. Philosophical Transactions for the months of March and April, 1694.

† Bolton, in his *Four Last Things*, who speaking of heaven, directs us to guess the immeasurable magnitude of it, (as otherwise——so) by the incredible distance from the earth to the starry firmament; and adds, "If I should here tell you the several computations of astronomers, in this kind, the sums would seem to exceed all possibility of belief." And he annexes in his margin sundry computations which I shall not here recite; you may find them in the author himself, *p.* 21. And yet besides, as he further adds, the late most learned of them place above the 8th sphere, wherein all those glorious lamps shine so bright, three moving orbs more. Now the empyrean heaven comprehends all these; how incomprehensible, then, must its compass and greatness necessarily be! But he supposes it possible, the adventure of mathematicians may be too audacious and peremptory, &c. and concludes the height and extent of the heavens to be beyond all human investigation.

on earth, but the invisible things in heaven, here is a regression to these latter, who were before, for their greater dignity, generally first mentioned, and now some enumeration given of them, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, and all things again repeated, that these might appear expressly included; said over again to be created by him, and for him, which was sufficient to express his creative right in them. It is presently subjoined, (*v.* 17.) "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." All owe their stability to him; namely, the mentioned thrones, dominions, &c. as well as other things. But how? or upon what terms? That we might understand his redemptory right was not here to be overlooked, it is shortly after added, "And having made peace by the blood of his cross, it pleased the Father" (to be repeated out of what went before) "by him to reconcile all things to himself;" and this *by him*, iterated; as if he had said, "By him shedding his blood on the cross, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven;" lest the thrones, dominions, &c. mentioned before, should be forgot. And a word is used accommodable enough to the several purposes before expressed, ἀποκαταλλάξαι, which doth not always suppose enmity, but more generally signifies, upon a sort of commutation, or valuable consideration, to procure or conciliate, or make a thing more firmly one's own, or assure it to himself; though it is afterwards used in the stricter sense, *v.* 21.

I have often considered with wonder and pleasure, that whereas God is called by that higher and far more extensive name, *the Father of spirits*, he is also pleased so graciously to vouchsafe, as to be styled *the God of the spirits of all flesh*; and thereby to signify, that having an order of spirits so meanly lodged that inhabit frail and mortal flesh, though he have a world of spirits to converse with whose dwelling is not with flesh, yet he disdains not a relation to so mean and abject spirits, his offspring also, in our world. And that, because this was the place of offending delinquents that he would recover, the Redeemer should sort himself with them, and, as they were partakers of flesh and blood, himself likewise take part of the same! This was great and Godlike, and speaks the largeness and amplitude of an all-comprehending mind, common to Father and Son, and capable of so applying itself to the greatest things, as not to neglect the least: and therefore so much the more magnifies God and our Redeemer, by how much the less considerable we and our world are. But that hence we should so over-magnify this world, as if nothing were considerable

that lies without its compass, is most perversely to misconstrue the most amazing condescension.

The Spirit of God, by holy David, teaches us to reason the quite contrary way: and from the consideration he had of the vastness and splendour of the upper world, of the heavens, the moon and stars, &c. not to magnify, but diminish our world of mankind, and say, What is man!

And let us further consider,

[2.] The inexpressible numerousness of the other world's inhabitants, with the excellencies wherein they shine, and the orders they are ranked into, and how unlikely it is, that holy souls that go thither should want employment. Great concourse and multitudes of people make places of business in this world, and must much more do so, where creatures of the most spiritual and active natures must be supposed to have their residence. Scripture speaks of *myriads*, which we read, *an innumerable company*, of angels, besides all the spirits of just men; (Heb. 12.) who are sometimes said to be more than *any one*—ἀνθρώπου, which we causelessly render *man*, could number, Rev. 7. And when we are told of many heavens, above all which our Lord Jesus is said to have ascended, are all those heavens only empty solitudes? Uninhabited glorious deserts? When we find how full of vitality this base earth of ours is; how replenished with living creatures, not only on the surface, but within it, how unreasonable is it to suppose the nobler parts of the universe to be less peopled with inhabitants, of proportionable spirituality, activity, liveliness, and vigour, to the several regions, which, the remoter they are from dull earth, must be supposed still the finer, and apt to afford fit and suitable habitations to such creatures? Whether we suppose pure unclothed spirits to be the natives in all those heavens, all comprehended under the one name of *angels*, or whether, as some think of all created spirits, that they have all vital union with some or other vehicles, ethereal or celestial, more or less fine and pure, as the region is to which they belong, having gradually associated unto them the spirits of holy men gone from us, which are said to be ἰσάγγελοι—*angels' fellows*, (Luke 20. 36.) it is indifferent to our purpose.

Let us only consider them all as intelligent, spiritual beings, full of holy light, life, active power, and love to their common Lord and one another. And can we imagine their state to be a state of torpid silence, idleness, and inactivity, or that they have not much higher and nobler work to do *there*, than

they can have in such a world as this, or in such bodies as *here* they lug to and fro?

And the Scriptures are not altogether silent, concerning the distinct orders of those glorious creatures that inhabit all the heavens which this upper *hades* must be understood to contain; though it has not provided to gratify any one's curiosity, so far as to give us particular accounts of their differences and distinctions. And though we are not warranted to believe such conjectures concerning them as we find in the supposititious Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy*, or much less the idler dreams of Valentinus and the Gnosticks about their *Æones*, with divers more such fictions; yet we are not to neglect what God hath expressly told us, namely, That giving us some account of the creation in the *hades*, or the invisible part of it, there are thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, (and elsewhere archangels,) authorities; (Col. 1. 16. with 1 Pet. 3. 21.) which being terms that import order and government, can scarce allow us not to conceive, that of all those numberless multitudes of glorious creatures that replenish and people those spacious regions of light and bliss, there are none who belong not to some or other of those principalities and dominions.

Whence therefore, nothing is more obvious than to conceive, that whosoever is adjoined to them, ascending out of our world, presently hath his station assigned him, is made to know his post, and how he is to be employed, in the service and adoration of the sovereign Lord of all, and in paying the most regular homage to the throne of God and the Lamb: it being still to be remembered, that God is not worshipped there, or here, as an ἐνδεής, or as though he needed any thing, since he gives to all breath and being, and all things, (Acts 17.) but that the felicity of his most excellent creatures doth in great part consist in acting perpetually according to the dictate of a just and right mind; and that therefore they take highest pleasure in prostration, in casting down their crowns, in shrinking even into nothing, before the original, eternal, subsistent Being, that he may be owned as the All in all, because they follow, herein, a most satisfied judgment, and express it when they say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created, Rev. 4. 11. And worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength," &c. *ch.* 5. 12.

And they that rest not night or day from such high and glo-

rious employments, have they nothing to do? Or will we say or think, because we see not how the heavenly potentates lead on their bright legions, to present themselves before the throne, to tender their obeisance, or receive commands and dispatches to this or that far remote dynasty; or suppose to such and such a mighty star, (whereof there are so numberless myriads; and why should we suppose them not replenished with glorious inhabitants?) whither they fly as quick as thought, with joyful speed, under the all-seeing Eye, glad to execute wise and just commands upon all occasions. But alas! in all this we can but darken counsel with words without knowledge. We cannot pretend to knowledge in these things; yet if from Scripture intimations, and the concurrent reason of things, we only make suppositions of what may be, not conclusions of what is; let our thoughts ascend as much higher as they can. I see not why they should fall lower than all this. And because we cannot be positive, will we therefore say or think there can be no such thing, or nothing but dull inactivity, in those regions? Because that other world is *hades*, and we see nothing, shall we make little or next to nothing of it? We should think it very absurd reasoning, (if we should use it, in reference to such mean trifles in comparison, and say,) There is no such thing as pomp and state, no such thing as action or business, in the court of Spain or France, of Persia or Japan, because no sound from thence strikes our ear, or the beams of majesty there dazzle not our eye.

I should indeed think it very unreasonable to make mere magnitude, or vast extent of space, filled up with nothing but void air, ether, or other fine matter, (call it by what name you will,) alone, or by itself, a very considerable note of excellency of the other invisible world, above this visible world of ours. But I reckon it much more unreasonable and unenforced, (to say no more,) by any principles, either of philosophy or religion, finding this world of ours, a baser part of the creation, so full of life, and of living inhabitants, of one degree or another; to suppose the nobler parts of the universe, still ascending upwards, generally unpeopled, and desert, when it is so conceivable in itself, and so aptly tending to magnify our Creator and Redeemer, that all the upper regions be fully inhabited with intelligent creatures; whether mere spirits, unclothed with any thing material, or united with some or other matter, we need not determine.

And whereas Scripture plainly intimates, that the apostate revolted spirits that fell from God, and kept not their first sta-

tions, were vastly numerous; we have hence scope enough for our thoughts to conceive, that so spacious regions being replenished with intelligent creatures, always innocent and happy, the delinquents, compared with them, may be as despicable for their paucity, as they are detestable for their apostasy: and that the horrid *hades*, wherein they are reserved to the blackness of darkness for ever, may be no more in proportion, nay, inexpressibly less, than some little rocky island, appointed as a place of punishment for criminals, in comparison of a flourishing, vast empire, fully peopled with industrious, rich, sober-minded, and happy inhabitants.

We might further consider,

[3.] The high perfection they presently attain to, who are removed, though in their younger years, out of this, into that other world.

The spirits of just men are there said to be made perfect. Waving the Olympick metaphor, which is, at most, but the thing signifying; that which is signified, cannot be less than the concurrence of natural and moral perfection: the perfecting of all our faculties, mind, will, and active power, and of all holy and gracious excellencies, knowledge, wisdom, love, holiness. The apostle makes the difference be, as that of a child, and that of a man, 1 Cor. 13. And would any one that hath a child he delights in, wish him to be a child always, and only capable of childish things? Or is it a reasonable imagination, that by how much we are more capable of action, we shall be the more useless, and have the less to do?

We may further lastly add, that which is not the least considerable,

[4.] That all the active services and usefulness we are capable of in this world, are but transitory, and lie within the compass of this temporary state of things, which must have an end. Whereas the business of the other world, belongs to our final and eternal state, which shall never be at an end. The most extraordinary qualifications for service on earth, must hereafter; if not by the cessation of the active powers and principles themselves, as tongues, prophecies, and such knowledge as is uncommon, and by peculiar vouchsafement afforded but to a few, for the help of many: these endowments, designed for the propagation of the Christian faith, and for the stopping the mouths of gainsayers, must in the use and exercise, at least, by the cessation of the objects and occasions, fail, and cease, and vanish away, 1 Cor. 13. 8. The like may be said of courage and fortitude to contend against prevailing wicked-

ness; skill, ability, with external advantages, to promote the impugned interest of Christ, and Christian religion; of all these there will be no further use in that other world. They are all to be considered as means to the end. But how absurd were it to reckon the means of greater importance than the end itself? The whole present constitution of Christ's kingdom on earth, is but preparatory and introductive to the celestial kingdom. And how absurd were it to prefer this temporary kingdom to the eternal one, and present serviceableness to this, to perpetual service in the other?

It is true, that service to God and our Redeemer in this present state, is necessary in its own kind, highly acceptable to God, and justly much valued by good men. And we ought ourselves willingly to submit to serve God in a meaner capacity in this world, while it is his pleasure we shall do so; especially if God should have given any signification of his mind, concerning our abode in the flesh some longer time, as it is likely he had done to the apostle Paul, (Phil. 1. 24.) because he says, he was confident, and did know, that so it should be, (v. 25.) we should be abundantly satisfied with it, as he was. But to suppose an abode here to be simply and universally more eligible, is very groundless and unreasonable; and were a like case, as if a person of very extraordinary abilities and accomplishments, because he was useful in some obscure country village, is to be looked upon as lost, because his prince, being informed of his great worth, calls him up to his court, and finding him every way fit, employs him in the greatest affairs of state!

To sum up this matter, whereas the means are always according to usual estimate, wont to derive their value from their end; time, from eternity; this judgment of the case, that usefulness in this present state is of greater consequence and more important than the affairs of the other world, breaks all measures, overturns the whole frame, and inverts the order of things; makes the means more valuable than the end; time more considerable than eternity; and the concernments of a state that will soon be over, greater than those of our fixed, permanent, everlasting state, that will never be over.

If we would allow ourselves the liberty of reasoning, according to the measure and compass of our narrow minds, biassed and contracted by private interest and inclination, we should have the like plausible things to think, concerning such of ours as die in infancy, and that when they have but newly looked into this world, are presently again caught out of it;

that if they had lived, what might they have come to? How pleasant and diverting might their childhood have been? How hopeful their youth? How useful their riper age? But these are commonly thoughts little wiser than theirs, and proceed from a general infidelity, or misbelief, that whatsoever is not within the compass of this little, sorry world, is all emptiness and nullity! Or if such be pious and more considering, it is too plain they do not, however, consider enough, how great a part it is of divine magnificence, to take a reasonable immortal spirit from animating a piece of well-figured clay, and presently adjoin it to the general assembly above! How glorious a change is made upon their child in a moment! How much greater a thing it is to be adoring God above, in the society of angels, than to be dandled on their knee, or enjoy the best provisions they can make for them on earth! That they have a part to act upon an eternal stage! and though they are but lately come into being, are never to go out of being more, but to be everlasting monuments and instruments of the glory of their great Creator and Lord!

Nor, perhaps, is it considered so deeply as it ought, that it hath seemed meet to the supreme Wisdom, upon a most important reason, in the case of lengthening or shortening the lives of men, not ordinarily, or otherwise than upon a great occasion, to interrupt the tendencies of natural causes. But let nature run its course: for otherwise, very frequent innovations upon nature would make miracles cheap and common, and consequently useless to their proper, great ends, which may be of greater significancy in the course of God's government over the world, than some addition to this or that life can be worth. And therefore this consideration should repress our wonderment, why God doth not, when he so easily can, by one touch upon this or that second cause, prevent or ease the grievous pains which they often suffer that love him, and whom he loves. He reckons it fitter, and they will in due time reckon so too themselves, when the wise methods of his government come to be unfolded and understood, that we should any of us bear what is ungrateful to us, in point of pain, loss of friends, or other unpleasing events of providence, than that he should make frequent and less necessary breaches upon the common order and course of government which he hath established over a delinquent, sinful world.

Whereupon it is a great piece of wisdom and dutifulness towards our great Lord, not to pray absolutely, peremptorily, or otherwise than with great submission and deference to his wise

and holy pleasure, for our own or our friends' lives, ease, outward prosperity, or any external or temporary good thing. For things that concern our spiritual and eternal welfare, his good and acceptable will is more expressly declared, and made known already and before-hand.

But as to the particular case of the usefulness of any friend or relative of ours in this or the other state, the matter must be finally left to the arbitrement and disposal of him who hath the keys of *hades* and of death. And when by his turn of them he hath decided the matter, we then know what his mind and judgment are, which it is no more fit for us to censure, than possible to disannul. Whatever great purposes we might think one cut off in the flower of his age capable of serving in this world, we may be sure he judged him capable of serving greater in the other.

And now by this time I believe you will expect to have somewhat a more particular account of this excellent young gentleman, whose early decease hath occasioned my discoursing so largely on this subject: not more largely than the importance, but much less accurately than the dignity, of it did challenge.

He was the eldest son of Sir Charles Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower, in the county of Lancaster, Baronet, and of the Lady Mary, daughter of the late Lord Viscount Masserene, his very pious consort: a family of eminent note in that northern part of the kingdom, for its antiquity, opulency, and interest in the country where it is seated; and which has intermarried with some or other of the nobility, one generation after another: but has been most of all considerable and illustrious, as having been itself, long, the immemorial, known seat of religion, sobriety, and good order, from father to son; giving example, countenance, and patronage, to these praise-worthy things to the country round about: and wherein, hitherto, through the singular favour and blessing of Heaven, there has not been that visible degeneracy that might be so plainly observed, and sadly deplored, in divers great families. As if it were an exemption from what was so anciently remarked by the Poet, *Ætas parentum, pejor avis—The age of our fathers is worse than that of their ancestors.* But, on the contrary, such as have succeeded have, by a laudable ambition and emulation, as it were, striven to outshine such as have gone before them, in piety and virtue.

In this bright and lucid tract and line, was this most hopeful young gentleman, now arrived to the age wherein we use

to write man, beginning to stand up in view, and to draw the eyes and raise the hopes of observers and well-wishers, as not likely to come short of any of his worthy ancestors and predecessors. But Heaven had its eye upon him too, and both made and judged him meet for an earlier translation, to a more eminent station there.

He was from his childhood observed to be above the common rate, docile, of quick apprehension, solid judgment, and retentive memory, and, betimes, a lover of books and learning.

For religion, his knowledge of the principles of it continually grew, as his capacity did more and more admit, under the eye and endeavours of his parents, and such other instructors as they took care he should never want. But his savour and relish thereof, and the impression made thereby upon his soul, was so deep, and so early, as to be apparently owing to a higher cause, the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, and a singular blessing thereby, upon his pious education. And in this way, it could not be easy, to such as were his most diligent and constant observers, to conclude or conjecture when God first began to deal with his spirit.

Above ten years ago, I had opportunity, for a few days, to have some conversation with him in his father's house: and, as I could then perceive, his spirit was much tinctured with religion; so I received information, that for a considerable time before, there constantly appeared in him such *specimina* of serious piety, as were very comfortable to his parents, and might be instructive to others that took notice of them.

In the course of divers following years, he greatly improved, under domestic and private instruction, both in grammar-learning and academical studies, for which he wanted not apt helps. When there was great reason to hope he was so well established in religion and virtue as neither to be shocked by the importunate temptations of a sceptical vicious age in the general, nor betrayed by the facility of his own youthful age, his prudent, worthy father, judged it requisite, and not unsafe, to adventure him into a place of more hazard, but greater advantage for his accomplishment in that sort of culture and polishing that might, in due time, render him both in reality, and with better reputation, serviceable in a public station; that is, where he might gain such knowledge of the world, of men, and of the laws of his country, as was proper for his rank, and one that was to make such a figure in the nation, as it was to be hoped he might; and upon that account, not yet a year ago,

brought him up to London, entered him in the Temple, took for him convenient lodgings there, and left him settled, unto mutual satisfaction.

He was little diverted by the noise, novelties, or the gaieties of the town, but soon betook himself to a course of close study; discontinued not his converse with God, and thereby learned, and was enabled, to converse with men warily and with caution, so as he might be continually improving and gaining good, without doing or receiving hurt.

The substance of the following account I received from a pious intelligent young man, who several years attended him before his coming to town, and afterwards, to the finishing of his course.

"Mr. Hoghton's early seriousness increased with his years. His deportment was grave, composed, without any appearance of pride, which he carefully avoided. His diligence in study was unusual, and his proficiency very great; neither was this less an effect of his conscientiousness in the improvement of his time, than of his desire after knowledge.

"As to his demeanour and performance of duties towards his several relations, his self-denial, his sedateness of mind, his fear of sin, his tenderness of conscience, love of the best things, and unconcernedness about things of an inferior nature, so far as hath fallen under my observation, in near six years' time, I believe few, if any, of his years, did exceed him.

"In his sickness he was very patient, submissively undergoing those heavy strokes it pleased God to lay upon him.

"Upon his apprehension of death, he seemed very little discouraged, but quietly resigned himself into the hands of the all-wise Disposer of all things.

"Some time before his sickness, and in the time of it, he said, afflictions were very proper for God's children; and those that were never afflicted, had reason to question the truth of their grace, and God's love to them; quoting that Scripture, 'If ye are without chastening, then are ye bastards, and not sons.'

"He often repeated those words, in the beginning of his illness: 'It is a hard thing to make our calling and our election sure.'—'I desire to glorify God.'

"When he understood, from some expressions of his physician, how dangerous his distemper was, he said, he knew very well the meaning of his physician's words; but that however it proved, he hoped he was safe.

"He was so strict in the observation of the Lord's-day, that if he happened to lie longer than ordinary in the morning, he would continue the later in duties in the evening; saying, we ought not to make that day shorter than other days.

"Though he was very intent on his studies, yet on Saturdays he always broke them off at noon, and spent the afternoon in reading divinity, and preparing himself for the Lord's-day.

"He was always constant in his secret duties, and suffered nothing to hinder him from the performing of them.

"Before he expired, he spoke with great assurance of his future happiness, and hopes of meeting his relations in glory." Thus far goes that account.

His sickness was short. When, hearing of it, I went to visit him, I was met in an anti-chamber, by his ingenious, dear brother, to whom it is no reproach to be second to him, and who, it is to be hoped, will be at least truly so; making him, though a fair example, yet not a standard; who has for divers years been most intimately conjunct and conversant with him, known his way, his spirit, his manner of life, his purity; and may be led on and excited thereby, wherein he hath observed him to excel others, to endeavour not to come short, but, if it were possible, to excel him; remembering, he is to be the next solace of his parents, hope of his family, and resort of his country, if God shall vouchsafe to continue him, in succeeding time.

From him, I had little expectation of finding his sick brother in a conversable condition, the malignity of his fever having before seized his head, and very much disordered his intellects; but going in, I was much surprised to find it so far otherwise. He presently knew me, and his understanding, that served him for little else, failed him not in the concernments of religion and of his soul. There was not an improper or misplaced word, though the case could not admit of interchanging many, that came from him. Concerning the substance of the gospel of Christ, as it could be shortly summed up to him, he said, he had no doubt. And his transactions with Christ himself, accepting him, resigning and intrusting himself absolutely and entirely to him, and God in him, were so explicit, distinct, and clear, as could leave no place of doubt concerning him. He professed his concurrence to such requests as were put up to God concerning him, and the next morning slept quietly in the Lord.

Nor now will it be unfit, to shut up the discourse with some

few suitable reflections upon this double subject: the *text*, and *this providence*, taken together.

1. How happy is it, when this power of our great Redeemer and Lord, mentioned in the text, and a preparation, with cheerful willingness, dutifully to comport with it, concur and meet together, as they have done in this instance! Our Lord hath shewn his power: he *asserted* it, in the text: in this instance he *used* it; giving an open testimony that he takes it to belong to him, to make such translations from one world to another, whensoever he judges it a fit season; nor is solicitous whether men acknowledge his right so to do, or no, or what censures they will pass upon what he hath done. He does his own work, and leaves men to their own talk, or mutterings, or wonder, or amusement at it, as they will. So it becomes sovereign power to do, established upon the most unquestionable foundations, exercised according to the wisest and most righteous measures. He hath used his own right, and satisfied himself in the use of it. He thought not himself concerned to advise with any of us about it, who, as his counsellor, should instruct him, Isa. 40. 13. Rom. 11. 34. He owes so much to himself, to act as accountable to no one, nor liable to any one's control.

Here is most rightful, resistless power, justly and kindly used on the one hand; and, on the other, how placid, how calm, a resignation! Here was no striving, no crying, no reluctant motion, no querulous, repining voice: nothing but peaceful, filial submission; a willingness to obey the summons given.

This was a happy accord, the willingness of this departing soul, proceeding not from stupidity, but trust in him who kept these keys; and such preparedness for removal, as the gospel required. O happy souls! that, finding the key is turning, and opening the door for them, are willing to go forth upon such terms, as "knowing whom they have believed," &c. And that neither "principalities nor powers, life nor death, &c. can ever separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord." Life, they find, hath not separated, whereof was the greater danger; and death is so far from making this separation, that it shall complete their union with the blessed God in Christ, and lay them enfolded in the everlasting embraces of divine love! Happy they, that can hereupon welcome death, and say, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!" that before only desired leave to die, and have now obtained it; that are, with certainty of the issue, at the point of becoming complete victors over the last enemy, and are ready to enter upon their triumph, and to

take up their ἐπινίκιον, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." Happy soul! here will be a speedy end of all thy griefs and sorrows; they will be presently swallowed up in an absolute plenitude and fulness of joy. There is already an end put to thy tormenting cares and fears; for what object can remain to thee of a rational fear, when once, upon grounds such as shake not under thee, thou art reconciled to death? This is the most glorious sort of victory, namely, by *reconciliation*. For so, thou hast conquered, not the enemy only, but the enmity itself, by which he was so. Death is become thy friend, and so no longer to be feared; nor is there any thing else, from whence thou art to fear hurt; for death was thy last enemy, even this bodily death. The whole region beyond it is, to one in thy case, clear and serene, when to others is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. There are no terrible ὑστερήματα, no formidable consequences, no reserves of misery, no treasures of wrath to be feared by thee. To one in thy condition, may that, without hesitation, be applied, *Nihil metuit, qui optat mori; He fears nothing, who desires to die.* Sen. Tr. What is the product of some men's infidelity, is the genuine product of their faith. From so contrary causes may proceed the same effect. The effect, a willingness to die, or a bold adventure upon death, is the same, but only in respect of the general kind; with great differences in the special kind, according to the difference and contrariety of the causes, whereof they discernibly taste and savour. With *infidels*, it is a negative, dead, stupid, partial willingness, or but a non-aversion; and in a lower, and much diminished degree: or if some present, intolerable, disgraceful calamity urge them, a rash, obstinate, presumptuous rushing upon death; because they *do not consider consequences*. With *believers*, such as in reference to the concernments of the other world do walk by faith, while as yet they cannot walk by sight, in reference to those things, (2 Cor. 5. 7.) it is a positive, vital, courage, (*v.* 8.) Θαῤῥοῦμεν, *We are confident;* and a preponderating inclination of will, "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;" because, as is manifest, they *do consider consequences*, and how blessed a state will certainly ensue! How vast are these special differences, of the same thing in the general, willingness to die!

O the transports of joy that do now most rationally result

from this state of the case, when there is nothing left lying between the dislodging soul, and the glorious unseen world, but only the dark passage of death, and that so little formidable, considering who hath the keys of the one, and the other! How reasonable is it, upon the account of somewhat common herein, to the Redeemer and the redeemed, although every thing be not, to take up the following words, that so plainly belong to this very case: "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*, or *hades;* thou wilt not forsake or abandon it in that wide world, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; the path that leads unto that presence of thine, where is fulness of joy, and to those pleasures which are at thy right hand; or in thy power, and which are for evermore; and shall never admit either of end, or diminution," Ps. 16. 9—11.

Now, what do we mean to let our souls hang in doubt? Why do we not drive things for them to an issue? Put them into those same safe hands that hold these keys; absolutely resign, devote, intrust, and subject them to him; get them bound up in the bundle of life; so adjoin and unite them to him, (not doubting but as we give them up, he will, and doth, in that instant, take hold of them, and receive them into union with himself,) as that we may assure our hearts, that because he lives, we shall live also, John 14. 19. Thus the ground of our hope becomes sure, and of that joy which springs from such a hope, Rom. 5. 2. Our life, we may now say, is hid with Christ in God; even though we are, in ourselves, dead, or dying creatures, Col. 3. 3. Yea, Christ is our Life; and when he "who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory," *v.* 4. He hath assured us, that because "he is the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in him, though he were dead, shall yet live:" and that "whosoever lives, and believes in him," hath thereby a life already begun in him, in respect whereof "he shall never die," John 11. 25, 26. What now can be surer than this? So far we are at a certainty, upon the included supposition, that is, that we believe in him.

And what now remains to be ascertained? What? Only our own intervening death. We must, it is true, be absent from these bodies, or we cannot, as we would, be present with the Lord. And is that all? Can any thing now be more certain than that? O happy state of our case! How should

our hearts spring and leap for joy, that our affairs are brought into this posture; that in order to our perfect blessedness, nothing is farther wanting but to die; and that the certainty of death completes our assurance of it! What should now hinder our breaking forth into the most joyful thanksgivings, that it is so little doubtful we shall die; that we are in no danger of a terrestrial immortality; and that the only thing that it remained we should be assured of, is so very sure: that we are sure it is not in the power of all this world to keep us always in it; that the most spiteful enemy we have in all the world, cannot do us that spite to keep us from dying! How gloriously may good men triumph over the impotent malice of their most mischievous enemies! namely, that the greatest mischief, even in their own account, that it can ever be in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more; for they now go quite out of their reach. They can (being permitted) kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, Luke 12. 4. What a remarkable, significant, *after that*, is this! what a defiance doth it import of the utmost effort of human power and spite, that here it terminates! It is now come to its *ne plus ultra!*

And so we are to look upon all our other trials and afflictions, that in any providential way may befal us; we may be sick, in pain, in poverty, in disgrace, but we shall not be always in mortal flesh, which is the *subtratum* and the root of all the rest. Can we be upon better terms, having but two things to be concerned about, as necessary to our complete felicity, union with Christ, and disunion from these bodies? God is graciously ready to assist us in reference to the former, though therein he requires our care, subserviently hereto: in reference to the latter, he will take care himself, in his own fit season, without any care or concern of ours in the matter; and only expects us to wait with patience, till that fit season come. And come it will, perhaps, sooner than we may think. He doth not always go by our measures in judging of the fit season, as this present instance shews.

2. From the text, taken in conjunction with this act of providence, we may observe the great advantage of a pious education. Though the best means of such education do not always prove effectual; yet this being much the more probable course, upon which to expect God's blessing, than the parents' profane negligence of the souls of their children, such an example, wherein God by his blessing testified his approbation of

parental care and diligence, should greatly quicken the endeavours of parents herein ; as hoping, hereby, to serve his great and merciful and most principal design, who hath these keys, and whose office it is, to transmit souls, when they are prepared and ready, out of this world of ours, into that blessed, glorious world above. And though they may think themselves disappointed, when, through God's blessing upon their endeavours, they have educated one to such a pitch as this young gentleman was raised and brought up unto, with a prospect and hope of his having a long course of service to run through here on the earth, yet let parents hence learn to correct what was amiss, or what was wrong, not what was right and well. Their action and endeavour were, what ought to be; their error or mistake, if there were any, was more principally, as the case is here stated, about their design and end. Not that they designed such an end, for that also was very justifiable and laudable : but if they designed it as their more principal end, which the case, as it is now put, supposes ; that is, that they take themselves to be disappointed : for no man complains of it as a disappointment, if he miss of an inferior end, and attain that which is far nobler and more excellent. Our great aim should be, the subserving the design of the great Lord of heaven and earth, which ultimately and supremely refers to the heavenly, eternal state of things ; and that souls may be ripened and fitted for that, and to do service here on earth, subordinately to the other, and while they are in preparation for the heavenly state. His principal design must be for that which is principal : and concerning that, as was formerly argued, there can be no more doubt, than whether heaven or earth, eternity or time, a fixed, permanent, everlasting, or a temporary, transitory, vanishing state of things, be more valuable, and to be preferred.

Our Redeemer hath acquired, and doth use these keys, for the translating of souls, as soon as he shall judge them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," Col. 1. 12. Some he makes meet much earlier than others. His design, so far as it is known, or may be supposed, should give measure to ours ; therefore ours must be to make them meet, as early as is possible, for his purposes, as knowing it cannot be too early : they were devoted to him early, and pursuantly hereto, no time should be lost from the great business of fitting and forming them for him ; inasmuch also, as the same qualifications, namely, that are of higher excellency and value, do equally prepare them to serve and glorify him, in either world, as he shall choose to dispose of them. And it unquestionably belongs to

him to make his choice, as it does to us to endeavour to make them ready. If any of us, having purposely educated a son for the service of his prince, and present him accordingly, we should submit it to his pleasure, to choose the station wherein he shall serve him; especially if he be a prince of celebrated wisdom and goodness. And should we complain, that he is put early into a station of much higher dignity than we thought of?

How little is this matter considered, by most, that go under the name of *Christian* parents; that are, more generally, very solicitous to have, as they call it, their children *christened;* but never have it in their thoughts to have them educated in the knowledge *of* Christ, or trained up *for* Christ. As if their baptism were intended for a mockery, their education, in the whole course of it, hath no such reference. It is how they may with better reputation bear up, not the name of Christ, but their own. Their aim looks no higher than that they may inherit their lands, maintain the honour of their families; appear, if such be their own rank, well-accomplished gentlemen: and of some of those little things that are thought requisite hereto, we may say, as our Saviour did in another case, These things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other, the much greater things, undone.

What should hinder, but that learning to sing, or dance, or fence, or to step gracefully, might consist with learning to know God in Christ, in which knowledge stands eternal life! Whatsoever hath real excellency, or hath any thing in it of true ornament, will no way disagree with the most serious Christianity. And how lovely is the conjunction of the well-accomplished gentleman, and the serious Christian! Only sever inconsistencies, as how fashionably to curse, and swear, and damn, and debauch, which are thought to belong to good breeding in our age.

Let not religion, reason, shame, and common sense, be so totally abandoned all at once, as that the same persons shall take care to have their children baptized into Christ's name, and be taught to renounce, by their deeds, that great name, almost as soon as they can pronounce the word.

Where so direct a course is not taken to make those of the succeeding age ignominiously bad, yet how little is done towards the making of them truly and usefully good? Much care is taken to shape and adorn the outside of the man, how little to form and furnish their minds! Here, if they can be brought to make or judge of a verse, or a jest, or a piece of wit, it is a great attainment. Or if, at home, they can have them taught

so much law as shall hereafter enable them to squeeze their tenants, and quarrel with their neighbours, or so much of behaviour as shall qualify them to keep gentlemen company; or if, as our pious poet phrased it, they ship them over, the thing is done: then they shall be able to talk a little of the fashions of this or that foreign country, and make much the better figure in their own.

But if, with all other parts of useful knowledge and good breeding that are thought requisite for this world, they be also well instructed touching their Redeemer's dominion over it, and the other world also; and concerning the nature, constitution, design, laws, and privileges of his kingdom; if it be seriously endeavoured to make them apt and prepared instruments of serving his interest here, as long as he shall please to continue them in any station on earth; and that they may also be made meet to be partakers, at length, of a far more excellent inheritance than an earthly parent could entitle them to, that of the saints in light; (Col. 1. 12.) if they can be fitted to stand in the presence of the Eternal King, and to keep company with angels and blessed spirits above—how worthy and noble a design is this! And with what satisfaction is it to be reflected on, if the parents have ground to apprehend they are herein neither unaccepted nor disappointed!

3. It is of ill presage to our land, that when he that hath these keys, uses them in the so early translation of so hopeful a person as this young gentleman was, so few such are observed to spring up for the support of the truly Christian interest in the succeeding generation. That the act of our great Redeemer and Lord herein was an act of wisdom and counsel, we cannot doubt. Against the righteousness of it, we can have no exception. The kind design of it towards them whom he so translates, is so evident in the visible agreement of their spirit and way, with the heavenly state as their end, as puts that matter out of question. But we are so much the more to dread the consequences, and to apprehend what may make our hearts meditate terror.

By the Christian interest, I am far from meaning that of a party: but what every one must take for Christianity, that will acknowledge there is any such thing. And for the support of that, in the most principal doctrines and laws of it, what is our prospect?

To go down here somewhat lower.

Let us suppose a rational susceptibleness, or capacity of religion, to be the difference of man, wherein the controversy

may seem to admit of being compromised; whether it be religion alone, or reason alone, of which this must be said, that it distinguishes man from the inferior creatures. And let it be reason, with this addition, an aptness, *suspicere numen*, to be impressed with some religious sentiment, or to conceive of, and adore, an original Being; the wise and mighty Author and Cause of all things. And now, how near akin are religion and humanity.

Let us next understand Christianity to be the religion of fallen man, designing his recovery out of a lapsed and lost state; that is, man having violated the law of his creation, and offended against the throne and government of his Creator, the supreme and universal Lord of all, it was reckoned not becoming so great a Majesty (though it was not intended to abandon the offenders to a universal ruin, without remedy) to be reconciled, otherwise than by a mediator and a reconciling sacrifice. For which, none being found competent but the Eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his own person, who was also the First and the Last, the Lord God Almighty; and partaking with us of flesh and blood, was capable, and undertook to be both Mediator and Sacrifice. It seemed meet to the offended Majesty, to vouchsafe pardon and eternal life, and the renewing grace requisite thereto, to none of the offenders, but through him; and accept from them no homage, but on his account. Requiring, wheresoever the gospel comes, not only repentance towards God, but faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the summary of the counsel of God contained therein; (Acts 20. 21—27.) and that all should honour the Son, as the Father requires to be honoured, John 5. 23.

Whereas now so apt a course as this was established for restoring man to himself and to God, through the influence of the blessed Spirit, flowing in the gospel dispensation from Christ as the Fountain; what doth it portend when, amidst the clear light of the gospel, that affords so bright a discovery of the glorious Redeemer, and of all his apt methods for bringing to full effect his mighty work of redemption, an open war is commenced against him and his whole design, by persons, under seal, devoted to him! If there were but one single instance hereof in an age, who would not with trembling expect the issue?

But when the genius of a Christian nation seems, in the rising generation, to be leading to a general apostasy from Christianity, in its principal and most substantial parts; and they are

only patient of some external rituals, that belong, or are made appendent to it, so as but to endure them, either with reluctancy, or contempt: when the juvenile wit and courage which are thought to belong to a gentleman entering upon the stage of the world are employed in satirizing upon the religion into which they have been baptized, in bold efforts against the Lord that bought them! whither doth this tend?

Some would seem so modest, as in the midst of their profane oaths, and violations of the sacred name of God, to beg his pardon, and say, God forgive them. But so ludicrously, as he whom Cato animadverts upon, for begging pardon, that he wrote in Greek, which he was unacquainted with, saying, he had rather ask pardon, than be innocent; * for what should induce him to do so unnecessary a thing, for which pardon should be necessary? These men think pardons very cheap things; but will God be mocked? Or doth he not observe? It is the prevailing atheistical spirit we are to dread, as that which may provoke jealousy, and to make himself known by the judgments he shall execute.

There is great reason to hope God will not finally abandon England. But is there not equal reason to fear, that before the day of mercy come, there may be a nearer day of wrath coming? A day that shall burn as an oven, and make the hemisphere about us a fiery vault! In our recovery from a lapsed state, which the religion professed among us aims at, there are two things to be effected: the restoring reason to its empire over the sensitive nature, that it may govern that, and the restoring religion and love to God to their place and power, that he may govern us. While the former is not done, we remain sunk into the low level with the inferior creatures; and till the latter be effected, we are ranked with the apostate creatures that first fell from God. The sensuality of brutes, and the enmity of devils, rising and springing up observably among us, import the directest hostility against the Redeemer's design. And them that bid this open defiance to him, he hath every moment at his mercy!

In the mean time, is this Immanuel's land? His right in us he will not disclaim. And because he claims it, we may expect him to vindicate himself. His present patience, we are to ascribe to the wisdom and greatness of an all-comprehending mind. He counts not a heap of impotent worms his match! But when the besom of destruction comes, one stroke of it

* Corn. Nep. Frag.

will sweep away multitudes: then contempt will be answered with contempt. They cannot express higher, than to oppose and militate against a religion, introduced and brought into the world by so clear, divine light, lustre, and glory, not by arguments, but by jests! O that we could but see their arguments, to dispute those keys out of his hands that holds them! But do they think to laugh away the power of the Son of God? "He also will laugh at their calamity," &c. (Prov. 1.) or expose them to the laughter of men wiser than they, Ps. 52. 5, 6. It is little wit to despise what they cannot disprove. When we find a connexion between death and judgment, how will they contrive to disjoin them. They will be as little able to disprove the one, as withstand the other.

But a great residue, it is to be hoped, our blessed Redeemer will, in due time, conquer in the most merciful way, inspiring them with divine wisdom and love, detecting their errors, mollifying their hardness, subduing their enmity, making them gladly submit to his easy yoke and light burthen. He is, before the world end, to have a numerous seed, and we are not to despair of their rising up more abundantly than hitherto among ourselves, so as no man shall be therefore ashamed to be thought a serious Christian, because it is an unfashionable or an ungenteel thing.

Then will honour be acquired, by living as one that believes a life to come, and expects to live for ever, as devoted ones, to the Ruler of both worlds, and candidates for a blessed immortality, under his dominion. Nor will any man covet to leave a better name behind him, here, or a more honourable memorial of himself, than by having lived a holy, virtuous life. It signifies nothing, with the many, to be remembered when they are gone: therefore is this trust wont to be committed to marbles and monumental stones. Some have been so wise, to prefer a remembrance among them that were so, from their having lived to some valuable purpose. When Rome abounded with statues and memorative obelisks, Cato forbad any to be set up for him, because (he said) he had rather it should be asked, Why he had not one, than why he had. *Plutarch de gerund. Republ.*

What a balmy memory will one generation leave to another, when "the savour of the knowledge of Christ shall be diffused in every place," (2 Cor. 2. 14.) and every thing be counted as dross and dung, that is in any competition with the excellency of that knowledge: when that shall overflow the world, and

one age praise his mighty works, and proclaim his power and greatness to the next: and the branches of religious families, whether sooner or later transplanted, shall leave an odour, when they are cut off, that shall demonstrate their nearer union with the true Vine, or speak their relation to the "Tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations;" even those that were deciduous, and have dropped off, may (without straining a borrowed expression) signify somewhat towards this purpose.

4. From both the mentioned subjects, good parents may learn to do God and their Redeemer all the service they can, and have opportunity for, in their own time; without reckoning too much upon what shall be done, by a well-educated, hopeful son, after they are gone, unless the like dispensation could be pleaded unto that which God gave to David, to reserve the building of the temple to his son Solomon, which, without as express a revelation, no man can pretend. The great Keeper of these keys may cross such purposes, and without excusing the father, dismiss the son first. But his judgments are a great deep, too deep for our line: and his mercy is in the heavens, (Ps. 36.) extending from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children, Ps. 103.

THE

LIVING TEMPLE,

OR

A DESIGNED IMPROVEMENT OF THAT NOTION,

THAT

A GOOD MAN

IS

THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

PART I.

CONCERNING

God's Existence,

AND

HIS CONVERSABLENESS WITH MAN.

Against Atheism, or the Epicurean Deism.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM LORD PAGETT,

BARON OF BEUDESERT,

IN THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD.

My honoured Lord,

I HAVE not the opportunity of begging your Lordship's foregoing leave to prefix your name to these papers; but despair not of your following pardon. Your name must be acknowledged great, through two potent empires, Christian and Mahometan; and the services greater which you have done to many that may perhaps not have heard the sound of your name. Your prudent and prosperous negotiations in the Austrian and Ottoman courts, have obliged multitudes, whose better genius hath taught them more to value themselves, than to think they were born to slavery; from which you have found means, in great part, to save Europe: *somewhere*, by charming great power, so as to conquer the inclination to use it to so ill a purpose; *elsewhere*, by preventing its increase, where that inclination was invincible. And hereby you have dignified England, in letting it be seen what it can signify in the world, when it is so happy as to have its interest managed by a fit and able hand.

Yet that knowledge your Lordship hath heretofore allowed me to have of you, cannot suffer me to think you will account your name too great to patronise the cause asserted in the following discourse. That it is unpolished, will not affect your Lordship; let that rest where it ought: the subject and design will, I doubt not, have your Lordship's countenance. And the rather, that it is not the temple of this or that party that is here defended, which would little agree to the amplitude of your Lordship's large mind, and your great knowledge of the world, but that wherein mankind have a common concern. A temple that is the seat of serious, living religion, is the more venerable, and the more extensive; the more defensible, and the more worthy to be defended, by how much it is the less appropriate to this or that sect and sort of men, or distinguished by this or that affected, modifying form; that which according to its primitive designation may be hoped, and ought to be the resort of all nations: which it is vain to imagine any one, of this or that external form, not prescribed by God himself, can ever be; unless we should suppose it possible, that one and the same human prince, or power, could ever come to govern the world. Such uniformity must certainly suppose such a universal monarchy as never was, and we easily apprehend can never be. Therefore, the belief that the Christian religion shall ever become the religion of the world, and the Christian church become the common universal

temple of mankind; that "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations flow to it;" (as, besides that, many other texts of holy Scripture do plainly speak;) and an intemperate contentious zeal for one *external, human form of God's temple* on earth, are downright inconsistencies. That belief, and this zeal, must destroy one another; especially, that which makes particular temples, engines to batter down each other, because they agree not in some human additionals, though all may be charitably supposed to have somewhat of divine life in them. Therefore we plainly see, that this universal, Christian, living temple must be formed and finished, not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the living God; which Spirit, poured forth, shall instruct princes, and the potentates of the world, to receive and cherish among their subjects the great essentials of Christian religion, and whatsoever is of plain divine revelation, wherein all may agree, rejecting, or leaving arbitrary, the little human additaments about which there is so much disagreement.

Heaven did favour us with such a king: and thanks be to God, that he hath given us such a queen, who is not for destroying any temples that may have true vital religion in them, because they neither all have, or have not, the same pinnacles, or other pieces of ornature alike. God grant all Christian princes and powers may herein equally imitate them both; as many do seriously lament the loss of the former.

It has been long the honour of your family to have had great esteem and reverence for such a temple. And I doubt not, but its having spread its branches into divers other worthy families of the Hampdens, Foleys, Ashhursts, Hunts, has given your Lordship much the more grateful and complacential view, for the affinity to your own in this respect. A temple so truly (and even only) august and great, spreads a glory over the families, kingdoms, and nations where it can have place. What is here written is a mean oblation, for the service of this temple; but acceptable, as even goats' hair was, by being consecrated, with a sincere mind, for the use of the tabernacle of old.

The First Part betakes itself to your Lordship as an orphan, upon the decease of its former patron, in hope of some sort of a postliminary reception. And for the Second Part, it is (as your Lordship shall vouchsafe to receive it) originally and entirely yours.

The former, your Lordship will see, had a former dedication: and I cannot think it will be displeasing to your Lordship, that I let it stand. For though it may seem somewhat uncouth and unusual to have two such epistles come so near one another, yet the unfashionableness hereof, I conceive, will, in your Lordship's judgment, be over-balanced by considerations of a preponderating weight, that are suggested to the reader. While, in the mean time, I cannot suppose it unacceptable to your Lordship, that a person of true worth in his time, related to the same county in which your Lordship hath so considerable concerns, and not altogether unrelated to yourself, should have had a participation with you in the same sort of patronage; with whom your Lordship hath also a true participation, in all the honour, esteem, and sincere prayers that ever were conceived for him, by

Your Lordship's most obedient,
And most devoted, humble Servant,
JOHN HOWE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Reader,

BE pleased to take notice, that the former part of this work was heretofore inscribed to that worthy person, Sir John Skeffington, of Fisherwick, in Staffordshire, Baronet: and who was at that time also, Viscount Lord Masserene, governor of the county of Londonderry, and one of the lords of his Majesty Charles the Second's most honourable Privy Council in the kingdom of Ireland; and now, since, deceased.

I have, however, thought fit to let it be reprinted, (the incongruity being, by this advertisement, avoided, of making an address anew, in this new impression, to one no longer in our world,) that the memory of a person so truly valuable may, so far as this can contribute thereto, be preserved; and because also, many things in this epistle may be useful, as a preface, to shew the design of the following discourse. And as this purpose may be equally served by it as it is, the other purpose being also, thus, better served, I have not judged it necessary, though that had been easy, to alter the form; which was as follows:

ALTHOUGH I am not, my Lord, without the apprehension that a temple ought to have another sort of dedication, yet I have no such pique at the custom of former days, but that I can think it decent and just that a discourse concerning one conceived under your roof, though born out of your house, should openly own the relation which it thereby hath, and the Author's great obligations to your Lordship; and upon this account I can easily persuade myself (though that custom hath much given place to this latter one) not to be so fashionable, as even to write in masquerade.

It were indeed most unbecoming, in the service of so noble a cause, to act in disguise, or decline to tell one's name. And as the prefixing of one so obscure as that which the title page bears, will be without suspicion of a design to recompense, by the authority of a name, any feared weakness of the cause itself; so were it very unworthy, having nothing better, to grudge the bringing even of so mean a thing, as a sacrifice to the door of the temple.

And although your Lordship's is of so incomparably greater value, yet also is it (as the equity of the case requires) exposed with less hazard; since in common account, the vouchsafement of pardon (whereof I cannot despair) for such assumed liberty, can with no justice be understood to import more than only a favourable aspect on the design, without any interest or participation in the disrepute of its ill management. So that your honour is in no more jeopardy than the main cause itself, which is but little concerned in the successfulness or miscarriage of this or that effort, which is made on behalf of it; and which, you are secure, can receive no real damage. For the foundations of this temple are more stable than those of heaven and earth, it being built upon that Rock against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

And if, in any unforeseen state of things, you should ever receive pre-

judice, or incur danger by any real service you should design unto the temple of God, your adventure would be the more honourable, by how much it were more hazardous. The Order of Templars, your Lordship well knows, was not, in former days, reckoned inglorious.

But as this temple is quite of another constitution and make than that at Jerusalem, and (to use those words of the Sacred Writer) ἀχειροποίητος, τουτέστιν οὐ ταύτης της κτίσεως.—*not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;* (Heb. 9. 11.) so what is requisite to the interest and service of it, is much of another nature. Entire devotedness to God, sincerity, humility, charity, refinedness from the dross and baseness of the earth, strict sobriety, dominion of one's self, mastery over impotent and ignominious passions, love of justice, a steady propension to do good, delight in doing it, have contributed more to the security and beauty of God's temple on earth; conferred on it more majesty and lustre; done more to procure it room and reverence among men, than the most prosperous violence ever did: the building up of this temple, even to the laying on the top-stone, (to be followed with the acclamations of Grace, Grace,) being that which must be done, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Which, inasmuch as the structure is spiritual, and to be situated and raised up in the mind or spirit of man, works, in order to it, in a way suitable thereto. That is, very much by soft and gentle insinuations, unto which are subservient the self-recommending amiableness and comely aspect of religion; the discernible gracefulness and uniform course of such in whom it bears rule, and is a settled, living law. Hereby the hearts of others are captivated and won to look towards it: made not only desirous to taste its delights, but, in order thereto, patient also of its rigours, and the rougher severities which their drowsy security and unmortified lusts do require should accompany it; the more deeply and thoroughly to attemper and form them to it. Merely notional discourses about the temple of God, and the external forms belonging to it, (how useful soever they be in their own kind and order,) being unaccompanied with the life and power whereto they should be adjoined, either as subservient helps, or comely expressions thereof, do gain but little to it in the estimation of discerning men.

Much more have the apparently useless and unintelligible notions, with the empty formalities too arbitrarily affixed to it, by a very great, namely, the unreformed part of the Christian world, even there exposed it to contempt, where the professed (but most irrational and hopeless) design hath been to draw to it respect and veneration.

And when these have become matter of strife, and filled the world with noise and clamour, through the imperious violence of some, and the factious turbulency of others; it hath made it look with a frightful aspect, and rendered the divine presence, so represented, an undesired, dreadful thing. This may make that the language of fear with some, (which is of enmity with the most,) "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Most of all; when a glorying in these things, and contention about them, are joined with gross immoralities; either manifest impiety, sensual debaucheries, acts of open injustice, or the no less criminal evil of a proud, wrathful, ungovernable temper of spirit; *this* hath made it a most hateful thing in the eyes of God and men, and turned that which should be the house of prayer unto all nations, into a den of robbers;

hath cast the most opprobrious contumely upon him whom they would entitle the owner of it. That is, when men will steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; and yet cry, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, &c.; it is as if they would make the world believe, that the holy God, the great Lover and Patron of purity and peace, had erected, on purpose, a house on earth, to be the common harbour and sanctuary of the vilest of men, the very pests of human society, and disturbers of mankind.

And if they were not the very worst, yet how absurd and senseless a thing were it, that he should be thought to appropriate a people to himself, have them solemnly baptized into his name, and trained up in a professed belief of those his more peculiar revelations, which are without the common notice of the most; and in the use of certain (somewhat different) external institutes, being yet content that, in all things else, they be but just like the rest of the world.

Though he may be, for some time, patient of this indignity, and connive at such a state and posture of things, (as he did a great while towards the Jews of old,) yet, that this should be thought the top of his design, and the thing he lastly aimed at, and would acquiesce in, supposes such a notion of God, as than which, worshipping a stock were not more foolish and impious; and professed atheism as rational and innocent.

This hath spoiled and slurred the glory of the Christian temple, the most august and magnificent the world hath, (and which, indeed, only hath right to the name,) made the religion of Christians look like an empty vanity, and appear, for many ages, but as an external badge of civil distinction between them and another sort of men, that are only contending for enlarging of empire, and who shall grasp most power into their hands; both having also their sub-distinguishing marks besides, under which too probably divers of those who have adjoined themselves to the so differenced parties, furiously drive at the same design. And these zealously pretend for religion and the temple of God; when, in the mean time, it were a thing perfectly indifferent (even in itself, as well as in the opinion of the persons concerned) what religion or way they were of, true or false, right or wrong, Paganish, Mahometan, Jewish, Christian, Popish, Protestant, Lutheran, Calvinistical, Episcopal, Presbyterial, Independent, &c.: supposing there be any of each of these denominations that place their religion in nothing else but a mere assent to the peculiar opinions, and an observation of the external formalities, of their own party; and that they never go further, but remain finally alienated from the life of God, and utter strangers to the soul-refining, governing power of the true religion. Only, that their case is the worse, the nearer they approach, in profession, to the truth.

And really, if we abstract from the design and end, the spirit and life, the tranquillity and pleasure, of religion, one would heartily wonder what men can see in all the rest, for which they can think it worth the while to contend, to the disquieting themselves and the world. Nobody can believe they regard the authority of God, in this doctrine or institution, rather than another, who neglect and resist the substance and main scope of religion, recommended to them by the same authority. And as to the matters themselves which will then remain to be disputed,

we have first the distinguishing name; and if we run over all those before recited, is it a matter of that consequence, as to cut throats, and lay towns and countries desolate, only upon this quarrel, which of these hath the handsomer sound? The different rites of this or that way, to them who have no respect to the authority enjoining them, must, in themselves, signify as little. And for the peculiar opinions of one or another sect, it may be soberly said, that a very great part understand no more of the distinguishing principles of their own, than he that was yet to learn how many legs a sectary had. Only they have learned to pronounce the word which is the *Shibboleth* of their party, to follow the common cry, and run with the rest, that have agreed to do so to.

But if they all understood the notions ever so well, (not to speak of only those which are peculiar to their way, but,) which are most necessary to true religion itself; were it not, in them, a strange frenzy, to contend with clubs and swords about a mere notion, which has no influence on their practice, and they intend never shall? If any should profess to be of opinion that a triangle is a figure that hath four corners, sober men would think it enough to say they were mad, but would let them quietly enjoy their humour, and never think it fit to levy armies against them, or embroil the world upon so slender a quarrel. And wherein can the notions belonging to religion be rationally of higher account, with them, who never purpose to make any use of them, and against which it is impossible for any to fight so mischievously by the most vehement, verbal opposition, as themselves do, by their opposite practice, most directly assaulting, and striking at, even what is most principally fundamental to religion and the temple of God? Not that these great things are unworthy to be contended for. All that I mean is, what have these men to do with them? or how irrationally and inconsistently with themselves do they seem so concerned about them?

For even lesser things, the appendages to this sacred frame, are not without their just value, to them who understand their intent and use. Nor am I designing to tempt your Lordship to the neglect or disesteem of any, the least thing appertaining to religion. And if any other should, I rejoice daily to behold in you that resolute adherence to whatsoever apparently divine truth and institution, to common order, decency, peace and unity, (which so greatly contribute both to the beauty and stability of God's house,) that may even defy and dismay the attempt; and gives ground, however, to be confident it would be labour bestowed as vainly, as it were impiously designed. So much greater assurance do you give of your constant fidelity and devotedness to the substance of practical religion itself.

Only how deeply is it to be resented, that while it should be so with all others, so few understand wherein that substance doth consist. I shall not now take notice of men's very different (which must infer some men's mistaken) apprehensions concerning the things necessary to be believed. But, besides that, though some religious sentiments be most deeply natural to men, (and, for aught we certainly know, as far extended as the true notion of humanity can be,) yet, in all times, there has been a too general mistake (not peculiar to the Paganish world only) of the true design, and proportionably of the genuine principle of it.

That is, it has not been understood as a thing designed to purify and refine men's spirits, to reconcile and join them to God, associate them with him, and make them finally blessed in him. But only to avert or

pacify his wrath, procure his favourable aspect on their secular affairs, (how unjust soever,) while, in the mean time, they have thought of nothing less than becoming like to him, acquainted with him, and happy in him. A reconciliation hath only been dreamed of on one side, namely, on his, not their own; on which, they are not so much as inclined to any thing else, than the continuance of the former distance and disaffection.

Consonantly whereto, it is plainly to be seen, that the great principle which hath mostly animated religion in the world hath not been a generous love, but a basely servile fear and dread. Whence the custom of sacrificing hath so generally prevailed (whencesoever it took its rise) in the Pagan world. And with so deep an apprehension of its absolute necessity, that men of even so vile and barbarous manners* as the Gauls of old, chose, in matters of controversy, to submit their greatest concernments to the pleasure and arbitrement of their Druids, (those sacred persons, as they reckoned them) rather than be interdicted the sacrifices (the only punishment they could inflict) in case of their refusal: which punishment (as is testified by Julius Cæsar†) they accounted the most grievous imaginable. And it needs not be said in what part of the world the same engine hath had the same power with men, even since they obtained to be called *Christian*. Which, while it hath been of such force with them, who, notwithstanding, persisted in courses of the most profligate wickedness; whence could their religion, such as it was, proceed, save only from a dread of divine revenge? What else could it design (though that most vainly) but the averting it, without even altering their own vile course?

Now let this be the account and estimate of religion; only to propitiate the Deity towards flagitious men, still remaining so; and how monstrous a notion doth it give us of God, that he is one that by such things can ever be rendered favourable to such men! Let it not be so, (while you sever its true and proper end also,) how most despicably inept and foolish a thing doth it make religion! A compages and frame of merely scenical observances and actions, intended to no end at all.

In a word, their religion is nothing but foolery, which is not taken up and prosecuted with a sincere aim to the bettering their spirits; the making them holy, peaceful, meek, humble, merciful, studious of doing good, and the composing them into temples, some way meet for the residence of the blessed God; with design and expectation to have his intimate, vital presence, settled and made permanent there.

The materials and preparation of which temple are no where entirely contained and directed, but in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: as, hereafter, we may with divine assistance labour to evince. The greater is the ignominy done to the temple of God, and the Christian name, by only titular and nick-named Christianity. Will they pretend themselves the temple of God, partakers in the high privilege and dignity of the Emmanuel, (in whom most eminently the Deity inhabiteth,) who are discernibly, to all that know them, as great strangers to God, and of a temper of spirit as disagreeing to him, of as worldly spirits, as unmortified passions, as proud, wrathful, vain-glorious, envious, morose, merciless, disinclined to do good, as any other men? When God cleanses his house, and purges his floor, where will these be found?

* See the character given of them by Cicero, Orat. pro Marc. Fon.
† Comment. lib. 6.

And for this temple itself, it is a structure whereto there is a concurrence of truth and holiness; the former letting in (it were otherwise a darksome, disorderly, uncomfortable house) a vital, directive, formative light, to a heavenly, calm, God-like frame of spirit, composed and made up of the latter.

It is this temple, my Lord, which I would invite you both to continue your respect unto in others, and, more and more, to prepare and beautify in yourself.

You will find little, in this part, offered to your view, more than only its *vestibulum*, or rather a very plain (if not rude) frontispiece; with the more principal pillars that must support the whole frame. Nor, whereas (by way of introduction to the discourse of this temple, and as most fundamental to the being of it) the existence of the great Inhabitant is so largely insisted on, that I think that altogether a needless labour. Of all the sects and parties in the world, (though there are few that avow it, and fewer, if any, that are so, by any formed judgment, unshaken by a suspicion and dread of the contrary,) that of atheists we have reason enough to suppose the most numerous, as having diffused and spread itself through all the rest. And though, with the most, under disguise, yet uncovering, with too many, its ugly face: and scarce ever more than in our own days. Wherefore, though it hath never been in any age more strongly impugned; yet, because the opposition can never be too common, to so common an enemy, this additional endeavour may prove not wholly out of season. And the Epicurean atheist is chiefly designed against in this discourse; that being the atheism most in fashion.

Nor is any thing more pertinent to the design of the discourse intended concerning God's temple; which, importing worship to be done to him, requires, first, a belief that he is.

And surely the [EI] inscribed of old, as Plutarch tells us, on the Delphic Temple; signifying, (as, after divers other conjectures, he concludes it to do,) *Thou dost exist*, is an inscription much more fitly set in view, at our entrance into the temple of the living God, whose name is, *I AM*.

Amidst the pleasant entertainments of which temple, (made more intimate to you than human discourse can make it,) may you spend many happy days in this world, as a preparative and introduction to a happier eternity in the other. Whereto he is under many and deep obligations, by any means, to contribute to his uttermost, who must (especially in the offices relating to this temple) profess himself,

My honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble,

Devoted Servant,

JOHN HOWE.

THE

LIVING TEMPLE,

OR

THE NOTION IMPROVED,

THAT

A GOOD MAN IS THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

This notion common. Authorities needless. Insignificant with the atheistical, who have made it more necessary to defend religion, and a temple in general, than this, or that. Better defended against them by practice and use, than argument, whereof they are incapable. Frequent disputes of its principles not necessary to the practice of religion. Some consideration of those supposed in the general notion of a temple, pertinent, however, to this discourse.

I. IT is so well known that this notion hath long obtained in the world, that we need not quote sayings to avouch it; wherewith not the sacred writings only, but others, even of Pagans themselves, would plentifully furnish us.

But as authorities are, in a plain case, needless to unprejudiced minds; so will they be useless to the prejudiced, be the case ever so plain. Nor is any prejudice deeper, or less vincible, than that of profane minds against religion. With such, it would in the present argument signify little, to tell them what hath been said or thought before by any others. Not because it is their general course to be so very circumspect and wary, as never to approve or assent to any thing, unless upon the clearest and most convincing demonstration: but from their peculiar dislike of those things only, that are of this special import and tendency. Discourse to them what you will of *a temple*, and it will be nauseous and unsavoury: not as being cross to their reason, (which they are as little curious

to gratify as any other sort of men,) but to their ill humour, and the disaffected temper of their mind; whence also (though they cannot soon or easily get that mastery over their understandings herein, yet because they would fain have it so) they do what they can to believe *religion* nothing else but the effect of timorous fancy, and *a temple*, consequently, one of the most idle impertinencies in the world.

To these, the discussion of the notion we have proposed to consider, will be thought a beating the air, an endeavour to give consistency to a shadow. And if their reason and power could as well serve their purpose as their anger and scorn, they would soon tear up the holy ground on which a temple is set, and wholly subvert the sacred frame.

I speak of such as deny the existence of the ever-blessed Deity; or, if they are not arrived to that express and formed misbelief, whose hearts are inclined, and ready to determine, even against their misgiving and more suspicious minds, that there is no God: who, if they cannot as yet believe, do wish there were none; and so strongly, as in a great degree to prepare them for that belief: and who would fain banish him not only out of all their thoughts, but the world too; and to whom it is so far from being a grateful sound, That the tabernacle of God is with men on earth, that they grudge to allow him a place in heaven. At least, if they are willing to admit the existence of any God at all, do say to him, Depart from us; and would have him so confined to heaven, that he and they may have nothing to do with one another: and do therefore rack their impious wits to serve their hypothesis either way; that under its protection they may securely indulge themselves in a course, upon which they find the apprehension of a God, interesting himself in human affairs, would have a very unfavourable and threatening aspect.

They are therefore constrained to take great pains with themselves to discipline and chastise their minds and understandings, to that tameness and patience, as contentedly to suffer the razing out of their most natural impressions and sentiments. And they reckon they have arrived to a very heroical perfection, when they can pass a scoff upon any thing, that carries the least signification with it of the fear of God; and can be able to laugh at the weak and squeamish folly of those softer and effeminate minds, that will trouble themselves with any thoughts or cares, how to please and propitiate *a Deity:* and doubt not but they have made all safe, and effectually done their business, when they have learned to put the ignominious

titles of frenzy, and folly, upon devotion, in whatsoever dress or garb; to cry *canting*, to any serious mention of the name of God, and break a bold adventurous jest upon any the most sacred mysteries, or decent and awful solemnities, of religion.

II. These content not themselves to encounter this or that *sect*, but *mankind;* and reckon it too mean and inglorious an achievement, to overturn one sort of temple or another; but would down with them all, even to the ground.

And they are bound, in reason and justice, to pardon the emulation which they provoke, of vying with them as to the universality of their design; and not to regret it, if they find there be any that think it their duty to wave a while serving the temple of this or that party, as less considerable, to defend that *one* wherein all men have a common interest and concernment, since matters are brought to that exigency and hazard, that it seems less necessary to contend about this or that *mode* of religion, as whether there ought to be any at all. What was said of a former age, could never better agree to any, than our own, "that none was ever more fruitful of religions, and barren of religion or true piety." It concerns us to consider, whether the fertility of those many doth not as well cause as accompany a barrenness in this one. And since the iniquity of the world hath made that too suitable, which were otherwise unseemly in itself, to speak of a temple as a fortified place, whose own sacredness ought ever to have been its sufficient fortification, it is time to be aware lest our forgetful heat and zeal in the defence of this or that *out-work*, do expose (not to say betray) the *main fortress* to assault and danger. For it hath long been by this means, a neglected, forsaken thing; and is more decayed by vacancy and disuse, than it could ever have been by the most forcible battery; so as even to promise the rude assailant an easy victory. Who fears to insult over an empty, dispirited, dead religion! which alive and shining in its native glory, (as that temple doth, which is compacted of lively stones united to the living corner stone,) bears with it a magnificence and state that would check a profane look, and dazzle the presumptuous eye that durst venture to glance at it obliquely, or with disrespect. The temple of the living God, manifestly animated by his vital presence, would not only dismay opposition, but command veneration also; and be both its own ornament and defence. Nor can it be destitute of that presence, if we ourselves render it not inhospitable, and make not its proper inhabitant become a stranger

at home. If we preserve in ourselves a capacity of the divine presence, and keep the temple of God in a posture fit to receive him, he would then no more forsake it, than the soul would a sound and healthy body, not violated in any vital part. But if he forsake it once, it then becomes an exposed and despised thing. And as the most impotent, inconsiderable enemy can securely trample on the dead body of the greatest hero, that alive carried awfulness and terror in his looks; so is the weak-spirited atheist become as bold now, as he was willing before, to make rude attempts upon the temple of God, when *He* hath been provoked to leave it, who is its life, strength, and glory.

III. Therefore as they who will not be treacherous to the interest of God and man must own an obligation and necessity to apply themselves to the serious endeavour of restoring the life and honour of religion; so will the case itself be found to point out to us the proper course in order hereto. That is, that it must rather be endeavoured by practice, than by disputation; by contending, every one with himself, to excite the love of God in his own breast, rather than with the profane adversary to kindle his anger, more aiming to foment and cherish the domestic, continual fire of God's temple and altar, than transmit a flame into the enemies' camp. For what can this signify? And it seldom fails to be the event of disputing against prejudice, (especially of disputing for the sum of religion at once against the prepossession of a sensual profane temper, and a violent inclination and resolvedness to be wicked,) to beget more wrath than conviction, and sooner to incense the impatient wretch than enlighten him. And by how much the more cogent and enforcing reasonings are used, and the less is left the confounded, baffled creature to say, on behalf of a cause so equally deplorate and vile; the more he finds himself concerned to fortify his obstinate will; to supply his want of reason with resolution; to find out the most expedite ways of diverting, from what he hath no mind to consider; and to entertain himself with the most stupifying pleasures, (which must serve the same turn that opium is wont to do in the case of broken, unquiet sleep,) or whatsoever may most effectually serve to mortify any divine principle, and destroy all sense of God out of his soul.

And how grateful herein, and meritorious often, are the assistant railleries of servile, and it may be mercenary, wits? How highly will he oblige them, that can furnish out a libel against religion, and help them with more artificial spite to blaspheme

what they cannot disprove. And now shall the scurrilous pasquil and a few bottles, work a more effectual confutation of religion, than all the reason and argument in the world shall be able to countervail. This proves too often the unhappy issue of misapplying what is most excellent in its own kind and place, to improper and incapable subjects.

IV. And who sees not this to be the case with the modern atheist, who hath been pursued with that strength and vigour of argument, even in our days, that would have baffled persons of any other temper than their own, into shame and silence? And so as no other support hath been left to irreligion, than a senseless stupidity, an obstinate resolvedness not to consider, a faculty to stifle an argument with a jest, to charm their reason by sensual softnesses into a dead sleep; with a strict and circumspect care that it may never awake into any exercise above the condition of dozed and half-witted persons; or if it do, by the next debauch, presently to lay it fast again. So that the very principle fails in this sort of men, whereto, in reasoning, we should appeal, and apply ourselves. And it were almost the same thing, to offer arguments to the senseless images, or forsaken carcasses of men. It belongs to the grandeur of religion to neglect the impotent assaults of these men: as it is a piece of glory, and bespeaks a worthy person's right understanding, and just value of himself, to disdain the combat with an incompetent or a foiled enemy. It is becoming and seemly, that the grand, ancient, and received truth, which tends to, and is the reason of the godly life, do sometimes keep state; and no more descend to perpetual, repeated janglings with every scurrilous and impertinent trifler, than a great and redoubted prince would think it fit to dispute the rights of his crown, with a drunken, distracted fool, or a mad-man.

Men of atheistical persuasions having abandoned their reason, need what will more powerfully strike their sense—storms and whirlwinds, flames and thunderbolts; things not so apt immediately to work upon their understanding, as their fear, and that will astonish, that they may convince, that the great God makes himself known by the judgments which he executes. Stripes are for the back of fools (as they are justly styled, that say in their hearts, There is no God). But if it may be hoped any gentler method may prove effectual with any of them, we are rather to expect the good effect from the steady, uniform course of *their* actions and conversation, who profess reverence and devotedness to an eternal Being; and the correspondence of their *way*, to their avowed *principle*, that

acts them on agreeably to itself, and may also incur the sense of the beholder, and gradually invite and draw his observation; than from the most severe and necessitating argumentation that exacts a sudden assent.

V. At least, in a matter of so clear and commanding evidence, reasoning many times looks like trifling; and out of a hearty concernedness and jealousy for the honour of religion, one would rather it should march on with an heroical neglect of bold and malapert cavillers, and only demonstrate and recommend itself by its own vigorous, comely, coherent course, than make itself cheap by discussing at every turn its principles: as that philosopher who thought it the fittest way to confute the sophisms against motion, only by walking.

But we have nothing so considerable objected against practical religion, as well to deserve the name of a *sophism;* at least, no sophism so perplexing in the case of *religious*, as of *natural* motion; jeers and sarcasms are the most weighty, convincing arguments: and let the deplorate crew mock on. There are those in the world, that will think they have however, reason enough to persist in the way of godliness; and that have already laid the foundation of that reverence which they bear to a Deity, more strongly than to be shaken and beaten off from it by a jest: and therefore will not think it necessary to have the principles of their religion vindicated afresh, every time they are called to the practice of it. For surely they would be religious upon very uncertain terms, that will think themselves concerned to suspend or discontinue their course as often as they are encountered in it with a wry mouth or a distorted look; or that are apt to be put out of conceit with their religion by the laughter of a fool; or by their cavils and taunts against the rules and principles of it, whom only their own sensual temper, and impatience of serious thoughts, have made willing to have them false. That any indeed should commence religious, and persist with blind zeal in this or that discriminating profession, without ever considering why they should do so, is unmanly and absurd; especially when a gross ignorance of the true reasons and grounds of religion shall be shadowed over with a pretended awe and scrupulousness to inquire about things *so sacred.* And an inquisitive temper shall have an ill character put upon it, as if *rational* and *profane* were words of the same signification. Or, as if reason and judgment were utterly execrated, and an unaccountable, enthusiastic fury, baptized and hallowed, were the only principle of religion. But when the matter hath undergone already, a severe inquisi-

tion, and been searched to the bottom; when principles have been examined; when the strength and firmness of its deepest and most fundamental grounds have been tried, and an approving judgment been past in the case, and a resolution thereupon taken up, of a suitable and correspondent practice; it were a vain and unwarrantable curiosity, after all this, to be perpetually perplexing one's easy path with new and suspicious researches into the most acknowledged things. Nor were this course a little prejudicial to the design and end of religion, (if we will allow it any at all,) the refining of our minds, and the fitting us for a happy eternity. For when shall that building be finished, the foundations whereof must be every day torn up anew, upon pretence of further caution, and for more diligent search? Or when will he reach his journey's end, that is continually vexed (and often occasioned to go back from whence he came) by causeless anxieties about his way; and whether ever he began a right course, yea or no?

Many go securely on in a course most ignominiously wicked and vile, without ever debating the matter with themselves, or inquiring if there be any rational principle to justify or bear them out. Much more may they, with a cheerful confidence persist in their well-chosen way, that have once settled their resolutions about it upon firm and assured grounds and principles, without running over the same course of reasonings with themselves in reference to each single, devotional act; or thinking it necessary every time they are to pray, to have it proved to them, that there is a God. But many of these do need excitation; and though they are not destitute of pious sentiments and inclinations, and have somewhat in them of the ancient foundations and frame of a temple, have yet, by neglect, suffered it to grow into decay. It is therefore the principal intendment of this discourse, not to assert the principles of religion against those with whom they have no place, but to propound what may some way tend to reinforce and strengthen them, where they visibly languish; and awaken such as profess a devotedness to God, to the speedy and vigorous endeavour of repairing the ruins of his temple in their own breasts; that they may thence hold forth a visible representation of an indwelling Deity, in effects and actions of life worthy of such a presence, and render his enshrined glory, transparent to the view and conviction of the irreligious and profane. Which hath more of hope in it, and is likely to be to better purpose, than disputing with them that more know how to jest, than rea-

son; and better understand the relishes of meat and drink, than the strength of an argument.

VI. But though it would be both an ungrateful and insignificant labour, and as talking to the wind, to discourse of religion, with persons that have abjured all seriousness, and that cannot endure to think; and would be like fighting with a storm, to contend against the blasphemy and outrage of insolent mockers at whatever is sacred and divine; and were too much a debasing of religion, to retort sarcasms with men not capable of being talked with in any other than such (that is, their own) language: yet it wants neither its use nor pleasure, to the most composed minds, and that are most exempt from wavering herein, to view the frame of their religion, as it aptly and even naturally rises and grows up from its very foundations; and to contemplate its first principles, which they may in the mean time find no present cause or inclination to dispute. They will know how to consider its most fundamental grounds, not with doubt or suspicion, but with admiration and delight;. and can with a calm and silent pleasure enjoy the repose and rest of a quiet and well-assured mind, rejoicing and contented to know to themselves, (when others refuse to partake with them in this joy,) and feel all firm and stable under them, whereupon either the practice or the hopes of their religion do depend.

And there may be also many others of good and pious inclinations, that have never yet applied themselves to consider the principal and most fundamental grounds of religion, so as to be able to give, or discern, any tolerable reason of them. For either the sluggishness of their own temper may have indisposed them to any more painful and laborious exercise of their minds, and made them to be content with the easier course of taking every thing upon trust, and imitating the example of others; or they have been unhappily misinformed, that it consists not with the reverence due to religion, to search into the grounds of it. Yea, and may have laid this for one of its main grounds, that no exercise of reason may have any place about it. Or perhaps having never tried, they apprehend a greater difficulty in coming to a clear and certain resolution herein, than indeed there is. Now such need to be excited to set their own thoughts to work this way, and to be assisted herein. They should therefore consider who gave them the understandings which they fear to use. And can they use them to better purpose, or with more gratitude to him who made them

intelligent, and not *brute* creatures, than in labouring to know, that they may also by a reasonable service worship and adore their Maker? Are they not to use their very senses about the matters of religion? For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, &c. And their faith comes by hearing. But what? are these more sacred and divine, and more akin to religion, than their reason and judgment, without which also their sense can be of no use to them herein? Or is it the best way of making use of what God hath revealed of himself, by whatsoever means, not to understand what he hath revealed? It is most true indeed, that when we once come clearly to be informed that God hath revealed this or that thing, we are then readily to subject (and not oppose) our feeble reasonings to his plain revelation. And it were a most insolent and uncreaturely arrogance, to contend or not yield him the cause, though things have to us seemed otherwise. But it were as inexcusable negligence, not to make use of our understandings to the best advantage; that we may both know that such a revelation is divine, and what it signifies, after we know whence it is. And any one that considers, will soon see it were very unseasonable, at least, to allege the written, divine revelation, as the ground of his religion, till he have gone lower, and fore-known some things (by and by to be insisted on) as preparatory and fundamental to the knowledge of this.

And because it is obvious to suppose how great an increase of strength and vigour pious minds may receive hence, how much it may animate them to the service of the temple, and contribute to their more cheerful progress in a religious course; it will therefore not be besides our present purpose, but very pursuant to it, to consider awhile, not in the contentious way of brawling and captious disputation, (the noise whereof is as unsuitable to the temple as that of axes and hammers,) but of calm and sober discourse, the more principal and lowermost grounds upon which the frame of religion rests, and to the supposal whereof, the notion and use of any such thing as a temple in the world, do owe themselves.

CHAP. II.

I. The two more principal grounds which a temple supposes. FIRST, The existence of God. SECONDLY, His conversableness with men: both argued from common consent. Doubtful if the first were ever wholly denied in former days. The second also implied, *First*, In the known general practice of some or other religion. Evidenced, *Secondly*, In that some, no strangers to the world, have thought it the difference of man. II. The immodesty and rashness of the persons from whom any opposition can be expected. III. These two grounds, namely, the existence of God, and his conversableness with men, proposed to be more strictly considered apart. And, FIRST, The existence of God, where the *notion* of God is assigned. The parts whereof are proposed to be evinced severally of some existent being. *First*, Eternity. *Secondly*, Self-origination. *Thirdly*, Independency. *Fourthly*, Necessity of existence. *Fifthly*, Self-activity. (The impossibility that this world should be this necessary self-active being. The inconsistency of necessary alterable matter, more largely deduced in a marginal digression.) *Sixthly*, Life. *Seventhly*, Vast and mighty power. A corollary.

1. NOW the grounds more necessary to be laid down, and which are supposed in the most general notion of a temple, are especially these two; The existence of God, and his conversableness with men. For no notion of a temple can more easily occur to any one's thoughts, or is more agreeable to common acceptation, than that it is a habitation wherein God is pleased to dwell among men.

Therefore to the designation and use of it, or (which is all one) to the intention and exercise of religion, the belief or persuasion is necessary of those two things, (the same which we find made necessary on the same account,) "That God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" Heb. 11. 6. as will appear when the manner and design of that his abode with men shall be considered.

These are the grounds upon which the sacred frame of a temple ought to stand, and without which it must be acknowledged an unsupported, airy fabric. And since it were vain to discourse what a temple is, or whereto the notion of it may be applied, unless it be well resolved that there is, or ought to be, any such thing. The strength and firmness of this its double ground should be tried and searched, and of its pretensions thereto.

And though it be not necessary in a matter that is so plain, and wherein so much is to be said otherwise; yet it will not be impertinent to consider, here, what prescription (which in clear-

ing of titles is wont to signify nothing) will signify in the present case. And,

First, For the existence of God, we need not labour much to shew how constantly and generally it hath been acknowledged through the whole world; it being so difficult to produce an uncontroverted instance, of any that ever denied it in more ancient times. For as for them whose names have been infamous amongst* men heretofore upon that account, there hath been that said, that at least wants not probability for the clearing them of so foul an imputation. That is, that they were maliciously represented as having denied the existence of a Deity, because they impugned and derided the vulgar conceits and poetical fictions of those days, concerning the multitude and the ridiculous attributes of their imaginary Deities. Of which sort Cicero † mentions not a few; their being inflamed with anger, and mad with lust; their wars, fights, wounds; their hatreds, discords; their births and deaths, &c.: who though he speaks less favourably of some of these men, and mentions one ‡ as doubting whether there were any gods or no, (for which cause his book in the beginning whereof he had intimated that doubt, (as Cotta is brought in, informing us,) was publicly burnt at Athens, and himself banished his country,) and two others § as expressly denying them; yet the more generally decried patron ‖ of atheism (as he hath been accounted) he makes Velleius highly vindicate from this imputation, and say of him, that he was the first that took notice that even nature itself had impressed the notion of God upon the minds of all men: who also gives us these as his words; "What nation is there or sort of men that hath not, without teaching, a certain anticipation of the gods, which he calls a prolepsis, a certain preventive, or fore-conceived information of a thing in the mind, without which nothing can be understood, or sought, or disputed of?" Unto which purpose the same author ¶ (as is commonly observed) elsewhere speaks; that there is no nation so barbarous, no one of all men so savage, as that some apprehension of the gods hath not tinctured his mind; that many

* Parker Tentamen. † De natura Deorum, liber 1.

‡ Protagoras Abderites.

§ Diagoras and Theodorus Cyrenaicus, who (as Diogenes Laertius, in Aristipides, reports) was surnamed ἄθεος, afterwards Διόσ.

‖ Epicurus, whom also his own Epistle to Menæceus in Diogenes Laertius acquits of atheism, but not of irreligion; as hereafter may be observed.

¶ Cicero, Tusculan Questions, l. 1.

do think indeed corruptly of them, which is (saith he) the effect of vicious custom; but all do believe there is a divine power and nature. Nor (as he there proceeds) hath men's talking and agreeing together effected this. It is not an opinion settled in men's minds by public constitutions and sanctions; but in every matter the consent of all nations is to be reckoned a law of nature.

And whatever the apprehensions of those few (and some others that are wont to be mentioned under the same vile character) were in this matter, yet so inconsiderable hath the dissent been, that as another most ingenious pagan author* writes, "In so great a contention and variety of opinons, (that is, concerning what God is,) herein you shall see the ὁμόφωνον νόμον και λόγον—*law and reason* of every country to *be harmonious and one;* that there is one God, the King and Father of all; that the many are but the servants and συνάρχοντες θεῶ—*co-rulers unto God;* that herein the Greek and the Barbarian say the same thing, the islander and the inhabitant of the continent, the wise and the foolish: go to the utmost bounds of the ocean, and you find God there. But if (says he) in all times, there have been two or three, ἄθεον καὶ ταπεινὸν, καὶ ἀναισθὲς γένος—*an atheistical, vile, senseless sort of persons*, whose own eyes and ears deceive them, and who are maimed in their very soul, an irrational and steril sort, as monstrous creatures, as a lion without courage, an ox without horns, or a bird without wings; yet, out of those, you shall understand somewhat of God: for they know and confess him, whether they will or no."

Secondly, His conversableness with men, as well as his existence, is *first* implied in the use of a temple, and the exercise of religion, which have been so common, (though not altogether equally common with the former,) that it is the observation of that famed moralist, † "That if one travel the world, it is possible to find cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without wealth, without coin, without schools and theatres. But a city without a temple, or that useth no worship, prayers, &c. no one ever saw. And he believes a city may more easily be built ἐδάφους χωρίς—*without a foundation, or ground* to set it on, than any community of men have or keep a consistency without religion.

And, *secondly*, it is no mean argument of the commonness of religion, that there have been some in the world, and those no idiots neither, that have accounted it the most constituent and

* Maximus Tyrius dissertationes I. † Plutarch adversus Colotem.

distinguishing thing in human nature. So that Platonic Jew * judgeth invocation "of God, with hope towards him, to be, if we will speak the truth, the only genuine property of man, and saith that *only he who* is *acted by such a hope*, is a *man*, and he that is *destitute of this hope*, is *no man*;" † preferring this account to the common definition, (which he says is only of the concrete of man,) that he is a reasonable, and mortal, living creature. And yet he extends not reason further, that is, to the inferior creatures; for he had expressly said above, "That they who have no hope towards God, have no part or share in the rational nature." And a noble person ‡ of our own says, "That upon accurate search, religion and faith appear the only ultimate differences of man; whereof neither *divine perfection* is capable, nor *brutal imperfection*;" reason, in his account, descending low among the inferior creatures. But *these* agreeing more peculiarly to man, and so universally, that he affirms, "There is no man well and entirely in his wits, that doth not worship some Deity." Who therefore accounted it a less absurdity to admit such a thing as a rational beast, than an irreligious man. Now if these have taken notice of any instances that seemed to claim an exemption from this notion of man, they have rather thought fit to let them pass as an anomalous sort of creatures, reducible to no certain rank or order in the creation, than that any should be admitted into the account, or be acknowledged of the society of men, that were found destitute of an inclination to worship the common Author of our beings. And according to this opinion, by whatsoever steps any should advance in the denial of a Deity, they should proceed by the same, to the abandoning their own humanity; and by saying there is *no God*, should proclaim themselves *no men*.

However, it discovers (which is all that is at present intended by it) the commonness, not to say absolute universality of religion, in the observation of these persons, whom we must suppose no strangers to the world, in their own and former times. And if it afford any less ground for such an observation in our present time, we only see that as the world grows older it grows worse, and sinks into a deeper oblivion of its original, as it recedes further from it.

And (notwithstanding) this so common a consent is yet not

* Philo. libr. de eo quod deterius potiori insid.

† μόνος ἔυελπις, ἄνθρώπος—ὁ δύσελπις ὐκ ἄνθρωπος.

‡ Herbert de veritate.

without its weight and significancy to our present purpose; if we consider how impossible it is to give or imagine any tolerable account of its original, if we do not confess it natural, and refer it to that common Author of all nature whom we are inquiring about: of which so much is said by divers others,* that nothing more needs here to be said about it.

II. And at least so much is gained by it to a temple, that unless some very plain and ungainsayable demonstration be brought against the grounds of it, (which will be time enough to consider when we see it pretended to,) no opposition, fit to be regarded, can ever be made to it. That is, none at all can possibly be made, but what shall proceed from the most *immodest* and *rash* confidence, animated and borne up only by a design of being most licentiously wicked, and of making the world become so. *Immodest* confidence it must be, for it is not a man, or a nation, or an age, that such have to oppose, but mankind; upon which they shall cast, not some lighter reflection, but the vilest and most opprobrious contumely and scorn that can be imagined. That is, the imputation of so egregious folly and dotage, as all this while to have worshipped a *shadow*, as the *author of their being*; and a *figment*, for their *common parent*. And this not the ruder only, and uninquisitive vulgar, but the wisest and most considering persons in all times. Surely less than clear and pregnant demonstration (at least not wild, incoherent, self-confounding suppositions and surmises, of which more hereafter) will never be thought sufficient to justify the boldness of an attempt that shall carry this signification with it. And it will be a confidence equally *rash*, as immodest. For what can be the undertakers' hope, either of success or reward? Do they think it an easy enterprise, and that a few quirks of malapert wit will serve the turn to baffle the Deity into nothing, and unteach the world religion, and raze out impressions renewed and transmitted through so many ages, and persuade the race of men to descend a peg lower, and believe they ought to live, and shall die, like the perishing beast? Or, do they expect to find men indifferent in a matter that concerns their common practice and hope, and wherein their zeal hath been wont to be such as that it hath obtained to be proverbial, to

* See Cicero in sundry places. *Grotius de veritate Christianæ Religionis. Du Plessis*, same subject and title. *Calvin's Institutes.* Episcopius his Institutiones Theologicæ, who hath written nervously on this subject; with many more: but especially Dr. Stillingfleet, in his *Orig. Sacr.*

strive as for the very altars? And what should their reward be, when the natural tendency of their undertaking is to exclude themselves from the expectation of any in another world? And what will they expect in this, from them whose temples and altars they go about to subvert? Besides, that if they be not hurried by a blind impetuous rashness, they would consider their danger, and apprehend themselves concerned to strike very sure. For if there remain but the least possibility that the matter is otherwise, and that *the being* doth exist, whose honour and worship they contend against, they must understand his favour to be of some concernment to them; which they take but an ill course to entitle themselves unto. Much more have they reason to be solicitous, when their horrid cause not only wants evidence, nor hath hitherto pretended to more than a bare possibility of truth on their side, but hath so clear (and as yet altogether unrefuted) evidence lying against it, that quite takes away that very possibility, and all ground for that miserable languishing hope, that it could ever have afforded them. Therefore is it left also wholly unimaginable, what principle can animate their design, other than a sensual humour, impatient of restraints, or of any obligation to be sober, just, and honest, beyond what their own inclination, and much-mistaken interest or conveniency, would lead them to.

By all which we have a sufficient measure of the persons from whom any opposition unto religion can be expected, and how much their authority, their example, or their scorn, ought to signify with us. And that a more valuable opposition can never be made, our experience, both that hitherto it hath not been, and that it would have been if it could, might render us tolerably secure. For surely it may well be supposed, that in a world so many ages lost in wickedness, all imaginable trials would have been made to disburthen it of religion; and somewhat that had been specious at least, to that purpose, had been hit upon, if the matter had been any way possible. And the more wicked the world hath been, so directly contrary and so continually assaulted a principle, not yet vanquished, appears the more plainly invincible. And that the assaults have been from the lusts of men, rather than their reason, shews the more evidently, that their reason hath only wanted a ground to work upon, which if it could have been found, their lusts had certainly pressed it to their service in this warfare, and not have endured, rather, the molestation of continual checks and rebukes from it.

Nor need we yet to let our minds hang in suspense, or be in a dubious expectation, that possibly some or other great wit may arise, that shall perform some great thing in this matter, and discover the groundlessness and folly of religion, by plain and undeniable reasons that have not as yet been thought on; but betake ourselves to a stricter and closer consideration of our own grounds, which if we can once find to be certainly true, we may be sure they are of eternal truth, and no possible contrivance or device can ever make them false.

III. Having therefore seen what *common consent* may contribute to the establishing of them jointly; we may now apply ourselves to consider and search into each of them (so far as they are capable of a distinct consideration) severally and apart. Having still this mark in our eye, our own confirmation and excitation in reference to what is the proper work and business of a temple, religion and conversation with God: how little soever any endeavour in this kind may be apt to signify with the otherwise minded.

FIRST, And for the existence of God; that we may regularly and with evidence make it out to ourselves, *that he is*, or *doth exist*, and may withal see what the belief of his existence will contribute towards the evincing of the reasonableness of erecting a temple to him, it is requisite, before we evince the *several parts* of some existent being, that we settle a true *notion* of him in our minds; or be at an agreement with ourselves, what it is that we mean, or would have to be signified by the name of God: otherwise we know not what we seek, nor when we have found him.

And though we must beforehand professedly avow, that we take him to be such a one as we can never comprehend in our thoughts; that this knowledge is too excellent for us, or he is more excellent than that we can perfectly know him; yet it will be sufficient to guide us in our search after his existence, if we can give such a description, or assign such certain characters of his being, as will severally or together distinguish him from all things else. For then we shall be able to call him by his own name, and say, This is God; whatever his being may contain more, or whatsoever other properties may belong to it, beyond what we can as yet compass in our present thoughts of him.

And such an account we shall have of what we are inquiring after, if we have the conception in our minds of an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that hath active power, life, wisdom, goodness, and whatsoever other

supposable excellency, in the highest perfection originally, in and of itself.

Such a Being we would with common consent express by the name of *God*. Even they that would profess to deny or doubt of his existence, yet must acknowledge this to be the notion of that which they deny or doubt of. Or if they should say this is not it, or (which is all one) that they do not deny or doubt of the existence of such a Being as this; they on the other hand that would argue for his existence, may conclude the cause is yielded them; *this* being that, which they designed to contend for.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that some things belonging to the *notion* of God might have been more expressly named. But it was not necessary they should, being sufficiently included here, as will afterwards appear: nor perhaps so convenient; some things, the express mention whereof is omitted, being such as more captious persons might be apt at first to startle at; who yet may possibly, as they are insinuated under other expressions, become by degrees more inclinable to receive them afterwards. And if this be not a *full* and *adequate notion*, (as who can ever tell when we have an express, distinct, particular notion of God, which we are sure is adequate and full?) it may however suffice, that it is a *true one*, as far as it goes, and such as cannot be mistaken for the notion of any thing else. And it will be more especially sufficient to our present purpose, if enough be comprehended in it to recommend him to us as a fit and worthy object of religion; and whereto a temple ought to be designed, as it will appear there is, when also we shall have added what is intended, concerning his conversableness with men. The ground whereof is also in great part included in this account of him; so that the consideration of it cannot be wholly severed from that of his existence; as hath been intimated above. That is, that if such a Being exist, unto which this notion belongs, it will sufficiently appear, he is such as that *he can* converse with men, though it doth not thence certainly follow that *he will*. For it were a rash and bold adventure, to say he could not be God, if he did not condescend to such terms of reconciliation and converse with apostate creatures. Whereof, therefore, more is to be said, than the mere manifesting his existence, in its own place.

And as to this, we shall endeavour to proceed gradually, and in the most familiar and intelligible way we can.

I am not unapprehensive that I might here indeed, following great examples, have proceeded in another method than

that which I now choose. And because we can have no true, appropriate, or distinguishing idea or conception of Deity, which doth not include necessity of existence in it, have gone that shorter way, immediately to have concluded the existence of God, from his idea itself. And I see not, but treading those wary steps which the incomparable Dr. Cudworth (in his Intell. System.) hath done, that argument admits, in spite of cavil, of being managed with demonstrative evidence. Yet since some most pertinaciously insist that it is at the bottom, but a mere sophism; therefore (without detracting any thing from the force of it as it stands in that excellent work, and the writings of some other noted authors) I have chosen to go this other way, as plainer and less liable to exception, though further about. And beginning lower, to evince from the certain present existence of things not existing necessarily, or of themselves, their manifest dependence on what doth exist necessarily or of itself; and how manifestly impossible it was that any thing should exist now, or hereafter to all eternity, if somewhat had not existed necessarily and of itself, from all eternity. And I trust that not only this will appear with competent evidence in the sequel of this discourse, but also that this necessary self-existent Being, is God, a Being absolutely perfect, such to whom the rest of his idea must belong; and to whom religion or the honour of a temple is due.

And because that was the point at which this discourse principally aims, and wherein it finally terminates, not merely the discovering of atheism, but irreligion; (from an apprehension that as to use and practice, it was all one to acknowledge no God at all, as only such a one to whom no temple or religion could belong;) it was besides my purpose, to consider the several *forms* or *schemes* of atheism, that have been devised in any age, as that excellent person hath done; and enough for my purpose, to refute the *Epicurean* atheism, or theism, (it is indifferent which you call it,) because that sect master while he was liberal in granting there were deities, yet was so impious as to deny worship to any, accounting they were such, as between whom and man there could be no conversation; on *their part*, by *providence*, or on *man's*, by *religion*. Therefore, if we shall have made it evident in the issue, that God is, and is conversable with men, both the *Epicurean* atheism vanishes from off the stage, and with it *all* atheism besides, and irreligion.

We therefore begin with God's existence. For the evincing whereof we may be most assured, *First*, That there hath been

somewhat or other from all eternity, or that looking backward, somewhat of real being must be confessed eternal. Let such as have not been used to think of any thing more than what they could see with their eyes, and to whom reasoning only seems difficult, because they have not tried what they can do in it, but use their thoughts a little, and by moving them a few easy steps, they will soon find themselves as sure of this, as that they see, or hear, or understand, or are any thing.

For being sure that something now is, (that you see, for instance, or are something,) you must then acknowledge, that certainly either something always was, and hath ever been, or been from all eternity; or else you must say, that sometime, nothing was; or that all being once was not. And so, since you find that something *now* is, that there was a time when any thing of being did *begin* to be, that is, that till that time, there was nothing; but now, at that time, somewhat first began to be. For what can be plainer than that, if all being *sometime* was not, and *now* some being is, every thing of being had a beginning? And thence it would follow that some being, that is, the first that ever began to be, did of itself start up out of nothing, or made itself to be, when before, nothing was.

But now, do you not plainly see that it is altogether impossible any thing should do so; that is, when it was as yet nothing, and when nothing at all as yet was, that it should make itself, or come into being of itself? For surely making itself is doing something. But can that which is nothing do any thing? Unto all doing there must be some doer. Wherefore a thing must be, before it can do any thing; and therefore it would follow that it was before it was; or *was* and *was not*, was *something* and *nothing*, at the same time. Yea, and it was diverse from itself. For a cause must be a distinct thing from that which is caused by it. Wherefore it is most apparent that some being hath *ever* been, or did *never begin* to be.

Whence further, it is also evident, *Secondly*, That some being was uncaused, or was ever of itself without any cause. For what never was from another had never any cause, since nothing could be its own cause. And somewhat, as appears from what hath been said, never was from another. Or it may be plainly argued thus; that either some being was uncaused, or all being was caused. But if all being were caused, then some one at least, was the cause of itself: which hath been already shewn impos-

sible. Therefore the expression commonly used concerning the first Being that it was of itself, is only to be taken *negatively*, that is, that it was not of another, not *positively*, as if it did sometime make itself. Or, what there is positive, signified by that form of speech, is only to be taken thus, that it was a being of that nature, as that it was impossible it should ever not have been. Not that it did ever of itself, step out of not being into being: of which more hereafter.

And now it is hence further evident, *Thirdly*, That some being is independent upon any other, that is, whereas it already appears that some being did never depend on any other, as a productive cause; or was not beholden to any other, that it might come into being. It is thereupon equally evident that it is simply independent, or cannot be beholden to any for its continued being. For what did never need a productive cause, doth as little need a sustaining or conserving cause. And to make this more plain, either some being is independent, or all being is dependent. But there is nothing without the compass of all being, whereon it may depend. Wherefore to say, that all being doth depend, is to say it depends on nothing, that is, that it depends not. For to depend on nothing, is not to depend. It is therefore a manifest contradiction, to say that all being doth depend: against which it is no relief to say, that all beings do circularly depend on one another. For so, however, the whole circle or sphere of being should depend on nothing, or one at last depend on itself; which negatively taken, as before, is true, and the thing we contend for; that one, the common support of all the rest, depends not on any thing without itself.

Whence also it is plainly consequent, *Fourthly*, That such a Being is necessary, or doth necessarily exist: that is, that it is of such a nature as that it could not, or cannot but be. For what is in being neither by its own choice, or any other's, is necessarily. But what was not made by itself (which hath been shewn impossible that any thing should) nor by any other, (as it hath been proved something was not,) it is manifest, it neither depended on its own choice, nor any other's that it is. And therefore its existence is not owing to choice at all, but to the necessity of its own nature. Wherefore it is always by a simple, absolute, natural necessity; being of such a nature, to which it is altogether repugnant, and impossible ever not to have been, or ever to cease from being. And now having gone thus far, and being assured that hitherto we feel the ground firm under us; that is, having gained a full certainty that there

is an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, and therefore actually and everlastingly existing; we may advance one step further;

And with equal assurance add, *Fifthly*, That this eternal, independent, uncaused, necessary Being, is self-active, that is, (which is at present meant,) not such as acts upon itself, but that hath the power of acting upon other things, in and of itself, without deriving it from any other. Or at least that there is such a Being as is eternal, uncaused, &c. having the power of action in and of itself. For either such a Being as hath been already evinced is of itself active, or unactive, or either hath the power of action of itself, or not. If we will say the latter, let it be considered what we say, and to what purpose we say it.

1. We are to weigh what it is we affirm, when we speak of an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, that is of itself totally unactive, or destitute of any active power. If we will say there is some such thing, we will confess, when we have called it something, it is a very silly, despicable, idle something, and a something (if we look upon it alone) as good as nothing. For there is but little odds between being nothing, and being able to do nothing. We will again confess, eternity, self-origination, independency, necessity of existence, to be very great and highly dignifying attributes; and that import a most inconceivable excellency. For what higher glory can we ascribe to any being, than to acknowledge it to have been from eternity of itself,* without being beholden to any other, and to be such as that it can be, and cannot but be in the same state, self-subsisting, and self-sufficient to all eternity? And what

* We will acknowledge an impropriety in this word, and its conjugate, *self-originate*, sometimes hereafter used: which yet is recompensed by their conveniency; as they may perhaps find who shall make trial how to express the sense intended by them in other words. And they are used without suspicion, that it can be thought they are meant to signify as if ever God gave original to himself; but in the negative sense, that he never received it from any other; yea, and that he is, what is more than equivalent to his being, self caused; namely, a Being of himself so excellent as not to need or be capable to admit any cause. Vid. c. 4. Sect. 3. And with the expectation of the same allowance which hath been given to ἀνίκητος, or other like words. We also take it for granted, (which it may suffice to hint here once for all,) that when we use here the word *self-subsistent*, it will be understood we intend by it, (without logical or metaphysical nicety,) not the mere exclusion of dependence on a subject, but on a cause.

inconceivable myriads of little senseless deities must we upon that supposition admit! (as would appear if it were fit to trouble the reader with an explication of the nature and true notion of matter, which the being now supposed, must be found to be!) but what can our reason either direct or endure, that we should so incongruously misplace so magnificent attributes as these, and ascribe the prime glory of the most excellent Being, unto that which is next to nothing? What might further be said to demonstrate the impossibility of a self-subsisting and self-original, unactive Being, will be here unseasonable and pre-occupying. But if any in the mean time will be so sullen as to say such a thing, let it,

2. Be considered to what purpose they say it. Is it to exclude a necessary self-active Being? But it can signify nothing to that purpose. For such a Being they will be forced to acknowledge, let them do what they can (besides putting out their own eyes) notwithstanding. For why will they acknowledge any necessary being at all, that was ever of itself? Is it not because they cannot, otherwise, for their hearts tell how it was ever possible that any thing at all could come into being? But finding that something is, they are compelled to acknowledge that something hath ever been, necessarily and of itself. No other account could be given how other things came to be. But what! doth it signify any thing towards the giving an account of the original of all other things, to suppose only an eternal, self-subsisting, unactive Being? Did that cause other things to be? Will not their own breath choke them if they attempt to utter the self-contradicting words, an unactive cause (that is, efficient or author) of any thing. And do they not see they are as far from their mark; or do no more towards the assigning the original of all other things, by supposing an eternal, unactive being only; than if they supposed none at all. That which can *do nothing*, can no more be the productive cause of another, than that which *is nothing*. Wherefore by the same reason that hath constrained us to acknowledge an eternal, uncaused, independent, necessary Being, we are also unavoidably led to acknowledge this being to be self-active, or such as hath the power of action in and of itself; or that there is certainly such a being, that is the cause of all the things which our sense tells us are, besides, existent in the world.

For what else is left us to say or think? Will we think fit to say, that all things we behold, were, as they are, necessarily existent from all eternity? That were to speak

against our own eyes, which continually behold the rise and fall of living things, of whatsoever sort or kind, that can come under their notice. And it were to speak against the thing itself, that we say, and to say and unsay the same thing in the same breath. For all the things we behold are in some respect or other (internal, or external) continually changing, and therefore could never long be beheld as they are. And to say then, they have been continually changing from eternity, and yet have been necessarily, is unintelligible, and flat nonsense. For what is necessarily, is always the same; and what is in this or that posture necessarily, (that is, by an intrinsic, simple, and absolute necessity, which must be here meant,) must be ever so. Wherefore to suppose the world in this or that state necessarily; and yet that such a state is changeable, is an impossible and self-contradicting supposition.†

† And whether by the way this will not afford us (though that be none of our present business) plain evidence that there can be no such thing as necessary, alterable matter, may be examined by such as think fit to give themselves the diversion. For let it be considered, if every part and particle that makes up the matter of this universe were itself a necessary being, and of itself from all eternity, it must have not only its simple being, but its being such or such, of itself necessarily; or rather every thing of it, or any way belonging to it, must be its very simple being itself. For whence should it receive any accession to itself, when it is supposed equally independent upon its fellows, as any of them upon it? Suppose then only their various intercurrent motion among themselves, requisite to prepare them to, and unite them in, the composition of particular bodies, and no other change of any other individual particle needful thereto, but only of their figure, place, and situation, till they shall come aptly to be disposed in the now attempted composition. How is even this change possible? For suppose one of these particles from eternity of such or such a figure, as triangular, hooked, &c. how can it lose any thing from itself, or suffer any alteration of its figure which essentially and necessarily belonged to it from eternity? That to which it is necessary to be such it is impossible to it not to be such. Or suppose no alteration of figure (which Epicurus admits not) were necessary; but of situation and motion till it become conveniently situate. Even this change also will be simply impossible. Because you can frame no imagination of the existence of this or that particle, but you must suppose it in some or other *ubi*, or point of space, and if it be necessarily, it is here necessarily; for what is simply nowhere is nothing. But if it be here necessarily, (that is, in this or that point of space, for in some or other it must be, and it cannot be here and there at once,) it must be here eternally, and can never not be here. Therefore we can have no notion of necessary alterable or moveable matter, which is not inconsistent and repugnant to itself. Therefore also motion must proceed from an immoveable mover, as hath been (though upon another ground) concluded of old. But how action *ad extra* stands with the immutability of the Deity, must be fetched from the consider-

And to say any thing is changing from eternity, signifies it is always undergoing a change which is never past over, that is, that it is eternally unchanged, and is ever the same. For the least imaginable degree of change is some change. What is in any, the least respect changed, is not in every respect the same. Suppose then any thing in this present state or posture, and that it is eternally changing in it; either a new state and posture is acquired, or not. If it be, the former was temporary, and hath an end; and therefore the just and adequate measure of it was not eternity, which hath no end; much less of the change of it, or the transition from the one state to the other. But if no new state or posture be acquired, (which any, the least gradual alteration would make,) then it is eternally unchanged in any, the least degree. Therefore eternal changing is a manifest contradiction.

But if it be said, though eternity be not the measure of one change, it may be of infinite changes, endlessly succeeding one another; even this also will be found contradictious and impossible. For, (not to trouble the reader with the more in-

ation of other perfections belonging thereto. Of which metaphysicians and schoolmen may be consulted, discoursing at large. See *Suarez. Ledesma de divina perfectione*, with many more, at leisure. Whatsoever difficulty we may apprehend in this case, or if we cannot so easily conceive how an eternal mind foreseeing perfectly all futurity, together with an external efficacious determination of will concerning the existence of such and such things to such an instant or point of time, can suffice to their production without a super-added efflux of power at that instant; which would seem to infer somewhat of mutation: yet as the former of these cannot be demonstrated insufficient, (nor shall we ever reckon ourselves pinched in this matter till we see that plainly and fully done,) so they are very obstinately blind that cannot see upon the addition of the latter the vast difference of these two cases, namely, the facile silent egress of a sufficient power, in pursuance to a calm, complacential, eternal purpose; for the production of this creation, by which the agent acts not upon itself, but upon its own creature made by its own action; and the eternal, blind, ungoverned action of matter upon itself, by which it is perpetually changing itself, while yet it is supposed necessarily what it was before. And how much more easily conceivable that is, than this; how also liberty of action consists with necessity of existence, divers have shewn: to which purpose somewhat not inconsiderable may be seen, *Ficin. lib. 2 cap. 12 de immortal. &c.* But in this there can be little pretence to imagine a difficulty. For our own being, though not simply, yet as to us is necessary, that is, it is imposed upon us: for we come not into being by our own choice; and yet are conscious to ourselves of no prejudice hereby to our liberty of acting. Yea, and not only doth the former consist with this latter, but is inferred by it. Of which see *Gilbeuf de libertati Dei, & creature.*

tricate controversy of the possibility or impossibility of infinite or eternal succession, about which they who have a mind may consult others, *) if this signify any thing to the present purpose, it must mean the infinite or eternal changes of a necessary being. And how these very terms do clash with one another, methinks any sound mind might apprehend at the first mention of them; and how manifestly repugnant the things are, may be collected from what hath been said; and especially from what was thought more fit to be annexed in the margin.

But now since we find that the present state of things is changeable, and actually changing, and that what is changeable is not necessarily, and of itself: and since it is evident that there is some necessary being; (otherwise nothing could ever have been, and that without action nothing could be from it;) since also all change imports somewhat of passion, and all passion supposes action, and all action, active power, and active power, an original seat or subject, that is self-active, or that hath the power of action in and of itself: (for there could be no derivation of it from that which hath it not, and no first derivation, but from that which hath it originally of itself; and a first derivation there must be, since all things that are, or ever have been, furnished with it, and not of themselves, must either mediately or immediately have derived it from that which had it of itself;) it is therefore manifest that there is a necessary, self-active Being, the Cause and Author of this perpetually variable state and frame of things.

And hence, since we can frame no notion of life which self-active power doth not, at least, comprehend, (as upon trial we shall find that we cannot,) it is consequent, *Sixthly*, That this being is also originally vital, and the root of all vitality, such as hath life in or of itself, and from whence it is propagated to every other living thing. †

And so as we plainly see that this sensible world did sometime begin to be, it is also evident that it took its beginning

* Parker Tentamen Physico-Theoligicum. Derodon. Philos. cont. Dr. More's Enchirid. Metaphys.

† Which will also prove it to be a *Spirit;* unto which order of beings essential vitality, or that life be essential to them, seems as distinguishing a property between it and a body, as any other we can fasten upon; that is, that though a body may be truly said to live, yet it lives by a life that is accidental, and separable from it, so as that it may cease to live, and yet be a body still; whereas a spirit lives by its own essence; so that it can no more cease to live than to be. And as where that essence is borrowed and derived only, as it is with all created spirits, so its life must needs be

from a Being essentially vital and active, that had itself no beginning.

Nor can we make a difficulty to conclude, *Seventhly*, That this Being (which now we have shewn is active, and all action implies some power) is of vast and mighty power, (we will not say infinite, lest we should step too far at once; not minding now to discuss whether creation require infinite power,) when we consider and contemplate the vastness of the work performed by it. Unto which (if we were to make our estimate by nothing else) we must, at least, judge this power to be proportionable. For when our eyes behold an effect exceeding the power of any cause which they can behold, our mind must step in and supply the defect of our feebler sense; so as to make a judgment that there is a cause we see not, equal to this effect. As when we behold a great and magnificent fabric, and entering in we see not the master, or any living thing, (which was Cicero's observation * in reference to this present purpose,) besides mice and weasels, we will not think that mice or weasels built it. Nor need we in a matter so obvious, insist further. But only when our severer reason hath made us confess, our further contemplation should make us admire a power which is at once both so apparent, and so stupendous.

COROLLARY. And now, from what hath been hitherto discoursed, it seems a plain and necessary consectary, that this world had a cause diverse from the matter whereof it is composed.

For otherwise matter that hath been more generally taken to be of itself altogether inactive, must be stated the only cause and fountain of all the action and motion that is now to be found in the whole universe: which is a conceit, wild and absurd enough; not only as it opposes the common judgment of such as have with the greatest diligence inquired into things of this nature, but as being in itself manifestly impossible to be true; as would easily appear, if it were needful to press far-

therewithal: so the eternal, self-subsisting Spirit, lives necessarily, and of itself, according as necessarily and of itself, it is, or hath its being.

Which is only annoted, with a design not to trouble this discourse with any disquisition concerning the nature and other properties of a spiritual Being. Of which enough hath been, with great evidence, said, by the incomparable Dr. More.

* De natura Deorum.

ther Dr. More's * reasonings to this purpose; which he hath done sufficiently for himself.

And also that otherwise all the great and undeniable changes which continually happen in it must proceed from its own constant and eternal action upon itself, while it is yet feigned to be a necessary being; with the notion whereof they are notoriously inconsistent. Which therefore we taking to be most clear, may now the more securely proceed to what follows.

CHAP. III.

I. The subject continued, wherein, *Eighthly*, Wisdom is asserted to belong to this Being. The production of this world by a mighty agent destitute of wisdom impossible. On consideration of, 1. What would be adverse to this production. 2. What would be wanting; some effects to which a designing cause will, on all hands, be confessed necessary, having manifest characters of skill and design upon them. II. Absurd here to except the works of nature; wherein at least equal characters of wisdom and design are to be seen, as in any the most confessed pieces of art, instanced in the frame and motion of heavenly bodies. III. A mean, unphilosophical temper, to be more taken with novelties, than common things of greater importance. Further instance, in the composition of the bodies of animals. IV. Two contrary causes of men's not acknowledging the wisdom of their Maker herein. V. Progress is made from the consideration of the parts and frame, to the powers and functions of terrestrial creatures. Growth, nutrition, propagation of kind, spontaneous motion, sensation. VI. The pretence considered, that the bodies of animals are machines. *First*, How improbable it is. *Secondly*, How little to the purpose. VII. The powers of the human soul. It appears, *First*, *Notwithstanding them*, it had a cause; *Secondly*, *By them*, a wise and intelligent cause. It is not matter: *that* not capable of reason. They not here reflected on who think reasonable souls made of refined matter, by the Creator. Not being matter, nor arising from thence, it must have a cause that is intelligent. VIII. Subject of the former chapter continued, and, *Ninthly*, Goodness asserted to belong to this Being.

I. THE subject continued, and we therefore add, *Eighthly*, That this Being is wise and intelligent, as well as powerful; upon the very view of this world, it will appear so vast power was guided by equal wisdom in the framing of it. Though this is wont to be the principal labour in evincing the existence of a Deity, namely, the proving that this universe owes its rise to a wise and

* Both in his *Immortality of the Soul*; and *Enchirid. Metaphys.*

designing cause; (as may be seen in Cicero's excellent performance in this kind, and in divers later writers;) yet the placing so much of their endeavour herein, seems in great part to have proceeded hence, that this hath been chosen for the great medium to prove that it had a cause diverse from itself. But if that once be done a shorter way, and it fully appear that this world is not itself a necessary being, having the power of all the action and motion to be found in it, of itself; (which already seems plain enough;) and it does most evidently thence also appear to have had a cause foreign to, or distinct from, itself; though we shall not therefore the more carelessly consider this subject; yet no place of doubt seems to remain, but that this was an *intelligent cause*, and that this world was the product of wisdom and counsel, and not of mere power alone. For what imagination can be more grossly absurd, than to suppose this orderly frame of things to have been the result of so mighty power, not accompanied or guided by wisdom and counsel? that is, (as the case must now unavoidably be understood,) that there is some being necessarily existent, of an essentially active nature, of inconceivably vast and mighty power and vigour, destitute of all understanding and knowledge, and consequently of any self-moderating principle, but acting always by the necessity of its own nature, and therefore to its very uttermost, that raised up all the alterable matter of the universe (to whose nature it is plainly repugnant to be of itself, or exist necessarily) out of nothing; and by the utmost exertion of that ungoverned power, put all the parts and particles of that matter into a wild hurry of impetuous motion, by which they have been compacted and digested into particular beings, in that variety and order which we now behold. And surely to give this account of the world's original, is, as Cicero speaks, not to consider, but to cast lots what to say; and were as mad a supposition, "as if one should suppose the one and twenty letters, formed (as the same author elsewhere speaks) in great numbers, of gold, or what you please else, and cast of any careless fashion together, and that of these loosely shaken out upon the ground, *Ennius's Annals* should result, so as to be distinctly legible as now we see them." Nay it were the supposition of a thing a thousand-fold more manifestly impossible.

1. For before we consider the gross absurdity of such a supposed production, that is, that a thing should be brought to pass by so mere a casualty, that so evidently requires an exquisitely-formed and continued design, even though there

were nothing positively to resist or hinder it, let it be considered what there will be that cannot but most certainly hinder any such production. To this purpose we are to consider, that it is a vast power which so generally moves the diffused matter of the universe.

Hereof make an estimate, by considering what is requisite to the continual whirling about of such huge bulks as this whole massy globe of earth; (according to some;) or, which is much more strange, the sun, (according to others,) with that inconceivably swift motion which this supposition makes necessary, together with the other planets, and the innumerable heavenly bodies besides, that are subject to the laws of a continual motion. Adding hereto how mighty a power it is which must be sufficient to all the productions, motions, and actions, of all other things.

Again, consider that all this motion, and motive power, must have some source and fountain diverse from the dull and sluggish matter moved thereby, unto which it already hath appeared impossible it should originally and essentially belong.

Next, that the *mighty, active Being*, which hath been proved necessarily existent, and whereto it must *first* belong, if we suppose it destitute of the self-moderating principle of wisdom and counsel, cannot but be always exerting its motive power, invariably and to the same degree: that is, to its very utmost, and can never cease or fail to do so. For its act knows no limit but that of its power; (if this can have any;) and its power is essential to it, and its essence is necessary.

Further, that the motion impressed upon the matter of the universe must hereupon necessarily have received a continual increase, ever since it came into being.

That supposing this motive power to have been exerted from eternity, it must have been increased long ago to an infinite excess.

That hence the coalition of the particles of matter for the forming of any thing had been altogether impossible. For let us suppose this exerted, motive power to have been, any instant, but barely sufficient for such a formation, because that could not be dispatched in an instant, it would by its continual, momently increase, be grown so over-sufficient, as, in the next instant, to dissipate the particles, but now beginning to unite.

At least, it would be most apparent, that if ever such a frame of things as we now behold could have been produced, that

motive power, increased to so infinite an excess, must have shattered the whole frame in pieces, many an age ago; or rather, never have permitted, that such a thing, as we call an age, could possibly have been.

Our experience gives us not to observe any so destructive or remarkable changes in the course of nature: and this (as was long ago foretold) is the great argument of the atheistical scoffers in these latter days, that things are as they were from the beginning of the creation to this day. But let it be soberly weighed, how it is possible the general consistency, which we observe things are at throughout the universe, and their steady orderly posture, can stand with this momently increase of motion.

And that such an increase could not, upon the supposition we are now opposing, but have been, is most evident. For, not to insist that nothing of impressed motion is ever lost, but only imparted to other things, (which, they that suppose it, do not *therefore* suppose, as if they thought, being once impressed, it could continue of itself, but that there is a constant, equal supply from the first mover,) we will admit that there is a continual decrease, or loss, but never to the degree of its continual increase. For we see when we throw a stone out of our hand, whatever of the impressed force it imparts to the air, through which it makes its way, or not being received, vanishes of itself, it yet retains a part a considerable time, that carries it all the length of its journey, and all does not vanish and die away on the sudden. Therefore when we here consider the continual, momently renewal of the same force, always necessarily going forth from the same mighty Agent, without any moderation or restraint; every following *impetus* doth so immediately overtake the former, that whatever we can suppose lost, is yet so abundantly over-supplied, that, upon the whole, it cannot fail to be ever growing, and to have grown to that all-destroying excess before mentioned. Whence therefore that famed restorer and improver of some principles of the ancient philosophy, hath seen a necessity to acknowledge it, as a manifest thing, "That God himself is the universal and primary Cause of all the motions that are in the world, who in the beginning created matter, together with motion and rest; and doth now, by his ordinary concourse only, continue so much of motion and rest in it, as he first put into it.—For (saith he) we understand it as a perfection in God, not only that he is unchangeable in himself, but that he works after a most constant and unchangeable manner. So that, excepting

those changes which either evident experience or divine revelation renders certain, and which we know or believe to be without change in the Creator, we ought to suppose none in his works, lest thereby any inconstancy should be argued in himself." * Whereupon he grounds the laws and rules concerning motion, which he afterwards lays down, whereof we referred to one, a little above.

It is therefore evident, that as without the supposition of a *self-active* Being there could be no such thing as *motion*; so without the supposition of an *intelligent* Being (that is, that the same Being be both *self-active*, and *intelligent*) there could be no *regular* motion; such as is absolutely necessary to the forming and continuing of any the compacted, bodily substances, which our eyes behold every day: yea, or of any whatsoever, suppose we their figures, or shapes, to be as rude, deformed, and useless, as we can imagine; much less, such as the exquisite compositions, and the exact order of things, in the universe, do evidently require and discover.

2. And if there were no such thing carried in this supposition, as is positively adverse to what is supposed, so as most certainly to hinder it, (as we see plainly there is,) yet the mere want of what is necessary to such a production, is enough to render it impossible, and the supposition of it absurd. For it is not only absurd to suppose a production which somewhat shall certainly resist and hinder, but which wants a cause to effect it: and it is not less absurd, to suppose it effected by a manifestly insufficient and unproportionable cause, than by none at all. For as nothing can be produced without a cause, so no cause can work above or beyond its own capacity and natural aptitude. Whatsoever therefore is ascribed to any cause, above and beyond its ability, all that surplusage is ascribed to no cause at all: and so an effect, in that part at least, were supposed without a cause. And if then it follow when an effect is produced, that it had a cause; why doth it not equally follow, when an effect is produced, having manifest characters of wisdom and design upon it, that it had a wise and designing cause? If it be said, there be some fortuitous or casual (at least undesigned) productions, that look like the effects of wisdom and contrivance, but indeed are not, as the birds so orderly and seasonably making their nests, the bees their comb, and the spider its web, which are capable of no design; that exception needs to be well proved before it be

* D. Cartes Princip. Philosoph. part 2.

admitted; and that it be plainly demonstrated, both that these creatures are not capable of design, and that there is not a universal, designing cause, from whose directive as well as operative influence, no imaginable effect or event can be exempted; (in which case it will no more be necessary, that every creature that is observed steadily to work towards an end should itself design and know it, than that an artificer's tools should know what he is doing with them; but if they do not, it is plain he must;) and surely it lies upon them who so except, to prove in this case what they say, and not to be so precarious as to beg or think us so easy, as to grant so much, only because they have thought fit to say it, or would fain have it so. That is, that this or that strange event happened without any designing cause.

II. But, however, I would demand of such as make this exception, whether they think there be any effect at all, to which a designing cause was necessary, or which they will judge impossible to have been otherwise produced, than by the direction and contrivance of wisdom and counsel? I little doubt but there are thousands of things, laboured and wrought by the hand of man, concerning which they would presently, upon first sight, pronounce they were the effects of skill, and not of chance; yea, if they only considered their frame and shape, though they yet understood not their use and end. They would surely think (at least) some effects or other sufficient to argue to us a designing cause. And would they but soberly consider and resolve what characters or footsteps of wisdom and design might be reckoned sufficient to put us out of doubt, would they not, upon comparing, be brought to acknowledge that there are nowhere *any* more conspicuous and manifest, than in the things daily in view, that go ordinarily, with us, under the name of *the works of nature?* Whence it is plainly consequent, that what men commonly call *universal nature*, if they would be content no longer to lurk in the darkness of an obscure and uninterpreted word, they must confess is nothing else but *common providence*, that is, the *universal power* which is everywhere active in the world, in conjunction with the *unerring wisdom* which guides and moderates all its exertions and operations; or the wisdom which directs and governs that power. Otherwise, when they see cause to acknowledge that such an exact order and disposition of parts, in very neat and elegant compositions, do plainly argue wisdom and skill in the contrivance; only they will distinguish, and say, It is so in the effects of *art*, but not of *nature*. What is this, but to

deny in particular what they granted in general? To make what they have said signify nothing more than if they had said, Such exquisite order of parts is the effect of wisdom, where it is the effect of wisdom, but it is not the effect of wisdom, where it is not the effect of wisdom? And to trifle, instead of giving a reason why things are so and so? And whence take they their advantage for this trifling, or do hope to hide their folly in it, but that they think, while what is meant by art, is known, what is meant by nature, cannot be known? But if it be not known, how can they tell but their distinguishing members are co-incident, and run into one? Yea, and if they would allow the thing itself to speak, and the effect to confess and dictate the name of its own cause, how plain is it that they do run into one, and that the expression imports no impropriety which we somewhere find in Cicero; *The art of nature;* or rather, that nature is nothing else but divine art, at least in as near an analogy as there can be, between any things divine and human? For, that this matter (even the thing itself, waving for the present the consideration of names) may be a little more narrowly discussed and searched into, let some curious piece of workmanship be offered to such a sceptic's view, the making whereof he did not see, nor of any thing like it, and we will suppose him not told that this was made by the hand of any man, nor that he hath any thing to guide his judgment about the way of its becoming what it is, but only his own view of the thing itself; and yet he shall presently, without hesitation, pronounce, This was the effect of much skill. I would here inquire, Why do you so pronounce? Or, What is the reason of this your judgment? Surely he would not say he hath no reason at all for this so confident and unwavering determination; for then he would not be determined, but speak by chance, and be indifferent to say that, or any thing else. Somewhat or other there must be, that, when he is asked, Is this the effect of skill? shall so suddenly and irresistibly captivate him into an assent that it is, that he cannot think otherwise. Nay, if a thousand men were asked the same question, they would as undoubtingly say the same thing; and then, since there is a reason for this judgment, what can be devised to be the reason, but that there are so manifest characters and evidences of skill in the composure, as are not attributable to anything else? Now here I would further demand, Is there anything in this reason, yea, or no? Doth it signify anything, or is it of any value to the purpose for which it is alleged? Surely it is of very great, inasmuch as, when it

is considered, it leaves it not in a man's power to think anything else; and what can be said more potently and efficaciously to demonstrate? But now, if this reason signify anything, it signifies thus much; that wheresoever there are equal characters, and evidences of skill, (at least where there are equal,) a skilful agent must be acknowledged. And so it will (in spite of cavil) conclude universally, and abstractly from what we can suppose distinctly signified by the terms of *art*, and *nature*, that whatsoever effect hath such, or equal characters of skill upon it, did proceed from a skilful cause. That is, that if this effect be said to be from a skilful cause, as such, namely, as having manifest characters of skill upon it, then, every such effect, namely, that hath equally manifest characters of skill upon it, must be, with equal reason, concluded to be from a skilful cause.

We will acknowledge skill to act, and wit to contrive, very distinguishable things, and in reference to some works, (as the making some curious *automaton*, or self-moving engine,) are commonly lodged in divers subjects; that is, the contrivance exercises the wit and invention of one, and the making, the manual dexterity and skill of others: but the manifest characters of both, will be seen in the effect. That is, the curious elaborateness of each several part shews the latter, and the order and dependence of parts, and their conspiracy to one common end, the former. Each betokens design; or at least the smith or carpenter must be understood to design his own part, that is, to do as he was directed: both together, do plainly bespeak an agent, that knew what he did; and that the thing was not done by chance, or was not the casual product of only being busy at random, or making a careless stir, without aiming at any thing. And this, no man that is in his wits, would, upon sight of the whole frame, more doubt to assent unto, than that two and two make four. And he would certainly be thought mad, that should profess to think that only by some one's making a blustering stir among several small fragments of brass, iron, and wood, these parts happened to be thus curiously formed, and came together into this frame, of their own accord.

Or lest this should be thought to intimate too rude a representation of their conceit, who think this world to have fallen into this frame and order, wherein it is, by the agitation of the moving parts, or particles of matter, without the direction of a wise mover; and that we may also make the case as plain as is possible to the most ordinary capacity, we will suppose (for instance) that one who had never before seen a watch, or any

thing of that sort, hath now this little engine first offered to his view; can we doubt, but he would upon the mere sight of its figure, structure, and the very curious workmanship which we will suppose appearing in it, presently acknowledge the artificer's hand? But if he were also made to understand the use and purpose for which it serves, and it were distinctly shewn him how each thing contributes, and all things in this little fabric concur to this purpose, the exact measuring and dividing of time by minutes, hours, and months, he would certainly both confess and praise the great ingenuity of the first inventor. But now if a by-stander, beholding him in this admiration, would undertake to shew a profounder reach and strain of wit, and should say,—Sir, you are mistaken concerning the composition of this so much admired piece; it was not made or designed by the hand or skill of any one; there were only an innumerable company of little atoms or very small bodies, much too small to be perceived by your sense, that were busily frisking and plying to and fro about the place of its nativity; and by a strange chance (or a stranger fate, and the necessary laws of that motion which they were unavoidably put into, by a certain boisterous, undesigning mover) they fell together into this small bulk, so as to compose it into this very shape and figure, and with this same number and order of parts which you now behold: one squadron of these busy particles (little thinking what they were about) agreeing to make up one wheel, and another some other, in that proportion which you see: others of them also falling, and becoming fixed in so happy a posture and situation, as to describe the several figures by which the little moving fingers point out the hour of the day, and the day of the month: and all conspired to fall together, each into its own place, in so lucky a juncture, as that the regular motion failed not to ensue which we see is now observed in it,—what man is either so wise or so foolish (for it is hard to determine whether the excess or the defect should best qualify him to be of this faith) as to be capable of being made believe this piece of natural history? And if one should give this account of the production of such a trifle, would he not be thought in jest? But if he persist, and solemnly profess that thus he takes it to have been, would he not be thought in good earnest mad? And let but any sober reason judge whether we have not unspeakably more manifest madness to contend against in such as suppose this world, and the bodies of living creatures, to have fallen into

this frame and orderly disposition of parts wherein they are, without the direction of a wise and designing cause? And whether there be not an incomparably greater number of most wild and arbitrary suppositions in *their fiction*, than *in this?* Besides the innumerable supposed repetitions of the same strange chances all the world over; even as numberless, not only as productions, but as the changes that continually happen to all the things produced. And if the concourse of atoms could make this world, why not (for it is but little to mention such a thing as this) a porch, or a temple, or a house, or a city, (as Tully speaks in the before recited place,) which were less operous and much more easy performances?

III. It is not to be supposed that all should be astronomers, anatomists, or natural philosophers, that shall read these lines; and therefore it is intended not to insist upon particulars, and to make as little use as is possible of terms that would only be agreeable to that supposition. But surely such general, easy reflections on the frame of the universe, and the order of parts in the bodies of all sorts of living creatures, as the meanest ordinary understanding is capable of, would soon discover incomparably greater evidence of wisdom and design in the contrivance of these, than in that of a watch or a clock. And if there were any whose understandings are but of that size and measure as to suppose that the whole frame of the heavens serves to no other purpose than to be of some such use as that, to us mortals here on earth; if they would but allow themselves leisure to think and consider, might discern the most convincing and amazing discoveries of wise contrivance and design (as well as of vastest might and power) in disposing things into so apt a subserviency to that meaner end. And that so exact a knowledge is had thereby of times and seasons, days and years, as that the simplest idiot in a country may be able to tell you, when the light of the sun is withdrawn from his eyes, at what time it will return, and when it will look in at such a window, and when at the other; and by what degrees his days and nights shall either increase or be diminished; and what proportion of time he shall have for his labours in this season of the year, and what in that; without the least suspicion or fear that it shall ever fall out otherwise.

But that some in later days whose more enlarged minds have by diligent search and artificial helps got clearer notices (even than most of the more learned of former times) concerning the true frame and vastness of the universe, the matter,

nature, and condition of the heavenly bodies, their situation, order, and laws of motion; and the great probability of their serving to nobler purposes, than the greater part of learned men have ever dreamed of before; that, I say, any of these should have chosen it for the employment of their great intellects, to devise ways of excluding intellectual power from the contrivance of this frame of things, having so great advantages beyond the most of mankind besides to contemplate and adore the great Author and Lord of all, is one of the greatest wonders that comes under our notice; and might tempt even a sober mind, to prefer vulgar and popular ignorance before their learned, philosophical deliration.

Though yet indeed, not their philosophy by which they would be distinguished from the common sort, but what they have in common with them, ought in justice to bear the blame. For is it not evident, how much soever they reckon themselves exalted above the vulgar sort, that their miserable shifting in this matter proceeds only from what is most meanly so; that is, their labouring under the most vulgar and meanest diseases of the mind, disregard of what is common, and an aptness to place more in the strangeness of new, unexpected, and surprising events, than in things unspeakably more considerable, that are of every day's observation? Than which nothing argues a more abject, unphilosophical temper.

For let us but suppose (what no man can pretend is more impossible, and what any man must confess is less considerable, than what our eyes daily see) that in some part of the air near this earth, and within such limits as that the whole scene might be conveniently beheld at one view, there should suddenly appear a little globe of pure flaming light resembling that of the sun; and suppose it fixed as a centre to another body, or moving about that other as its centre, (as this or that hypothesis best pleases us,) which we could plainly perceive to be a proportionably-little earth, beautified with little trees and woods, flowery fields and flowing rivulets with larger lakes into which these discharge themselves; and suppose we the other planets all of proportionable bigness to the narrow limits assigned them, placed at their due distances, and playing about this supposed earth or sun, so as to measure their shorter and soon absolved days, months, and years, or two, twelve, or thirty years, according to their supposed lesser circuits;—would they not presently, and with great amazement confess an intelligent contriver and maker of this whole frame, above a Posidonius or any mortal? And have we not

in the present frame of things a demonstration of wisdom and counsel, as far exceeding that which is now supposed, as the making some toy or bauble to please a child is less an argument of wisdom than the contrivance of somewhat that is of apparent and universal use? Or, if we could suppose this present state of things to have but newly begun, and ourselves pre-existent, so that we could take notice of the very passing of things out of horrid confusion into the comely order they are now in, would not this put the matter out of doubt? And that this state had once a beginning needs not be proved over again. But might what would yesterday have been the effect of wisdom, better have been brought about by chance five or six thousand years, or any longer time ago? It speaks not want of evidence in the thing, but want of consideration, and of exercising our understandings, if what were *new* would not only convince but astonish, and what is *old*, of the same importance, doth not so much as convince!

And let them that understand any thing of the composition of a human body (or indeed of any living creature) but bethink themselves whether there be not equal contrivance at least, appearing in the composure of that admirable fabric, as of any the most admired machine or engine devised and made by human wit and skill. If we pitch upon any thing of known and common use, as suppose again a clock or watch, which is no sooner seen than it is acknowledged (as hath been said) the effect of a designing cause; will we not confess as much of the body of a man? Yea, what comparison is there, when in the structure of some one single member, as a hand, a foot, an eye, or ear, there appears upon a diligent search, unspeakably greater curiosity, whether we consider the variety of parts, their exquisite figuration, or their apt disposition to the distinct uses and ends these members serve for, than is to be seen in any clock or watch? Concerning which uses of the several parts in man's body, Galen, * so largely discoursing in seventeen books, inserts on the by, this epiphonema, upon the mention of one particular instance of our most wise Maker's provident care; "Unto whom (saith he) I compose these commentaries," (meaning his present work of unfolding the useful figuration of the human body,) "as certain hymns, or songs of praise, esteeming true piety more to consist in this, that I first may know, and then declare to others, his wisdom, power,

* *Lib.* 3. De usu part. ex Lacun. Epit.

providence, and goodness, than in sacrificing to him many hecatombs: and in the ignorance whereof there is greatest impiety, rather than in abstaining from sacrifice. * Nor" (as he adds in the close of that excellent work) "is the most perfect natural artifice to be seen in man only; but you may find the like industrious design and wisdom of the Author, in any living creature which you shall please to dissect: and by how much the less it is, so much the greater admiration shall it raise in you; which those artists shew, that describe some great thing (contractedly) in a very small space: as that person (saith he) who lately engraved Phaeton carried in his chariot with his four horses upon a little ring—a most incredible sight! But there is nothing in matters of this nature, more strange than in the structure of the leg of a flea." How much more might it be said of all its inward parts? "Therefore (as he adds) the greatest commodity of such a work accrues not to physicians, but to them who are studious of nature, namely, the knowledge of our Maker's perfection, and that (as he had said a little above) it establishes the principle of the most perfect theology; which theology (saith he) is much more excellent than all medicine."

It were too great an undertaking, and beyond the designed limits of this discourse, (though it would be to excellent purpose, if it could be done without amusing terms, and in that easy, familiar way as to be capable of common use,) to pursue and trace distinctly the prints and footsteps of the admirable wisdom which appears in the structure and frame of this outer temple. For even our bodies themselves are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6. 19. And do dwell a while in the contemplation and discovery of those numerous instances of most apparent, ungainsayable sagacity and providence which offer themselves to view in every part and particle of this fabric; how most commodiously all things are ordered in it! With how strangely cautious circumspection and foresight, not only destructive, but even (perpetually) vexatious and afflicting incongruities are avoided and provided against, to pose ourselves upon the sundry obvious questions that might be put for the evincing of such provident foresight. As for instance, how comes it to pass that the several parts which we find to be *double* in our bodies, are not *single* only? Is this altogether by chance? That there are two eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet, &c.: what a miserable, shiftless creature had man

* Sub. fin. *l.* 17.

been, if there had only been allowed him one foot? A seeing, hearing, talking, unmoving statue. That the hand is divided into fingers? Those so conveniently situate, one in so fitly opposite a posture to the rest?

And what if some one pair or other of these parts had been universally wanting? The hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears. How great a misery had it inferred upon mankind! and is it only a casualty that it is not so? That the back-bone is composed of so many joints, (twenty-four, besides those of that which is the basis and sustainer of the whole,) and is not all of a piece, by which stooping, or any motion of the head or neck, diverse from that of the whole body, had been altogether impossible; that there is such variety and curiosity in the ways of joining the bones together in that, and other parts of the body; that in some parts, they are joined by mere adherence of one to another, * either with or without an intervening medium, and both these ways, so diversely; that others are fastened together by proper jointing, so as to suit and be accompanied with motion, either more obscure or more manifest, and this, either by a deeper or more superficial insertion of one bone into another, or by a mutual insertion, and that so different ways; and that all these should be so exactly accommodated to the several parts and uses to which they belong and serve:—was all this without design? Who, that views the curious and apt texture of the eye, can think it was not made on purpose to see with, † and the ear, upon the like view, for hearing, when so many things must concur that these actions might be performed by these organs, and are found to do so? Or who can think that the sundry little engines belonging to the eye were not made with design to move it upwards, downwards, to this side or that, or whirl it about as there should be occasion; without which instruments and their appendages, no such motion could have been? Who, that is not stupidly perverse, can think that the sundry inward parts (which it would require a volume distinctly to speak of, and but to mention them and their uses would too unproportionably swell this part of this discourse) were not made purposely by a designing Agent, for the ends they so aptly and constantly serve for? The want of some one among divers whereof, or

* Bartholin. Riolanus.

† How foolish to think that art intended an end in making a window to see through, and that nature intended none in making an eye to see with; as Campanella in that rapturous discourse of his Atheismus triumphatus.

but a little misplacing, or if things had been but a little otherwise than they are, had inferred an impossibility that such a creature as man could have subsisted, or been propagated upon the face of the earth. As what if there had not been such a receptacle prepared as the stomach is, and so formed, and placed as it is, to receive and digest necessary nutriment? * Had not the whole frame of man besides been in vain? Or what if the passage from it downward, had not been made somewhat, a little way ascending, so as to detain a convenient time what is received, but that what was taken in were suddenly transmitted? It is evident the whole structure had been ruined as soon as made. What (to instance in what seems so small a matter) if that little cover had been wanting at the entrance of that passage through which we breathe; (the depression whereof by the weight of what we eat or drink, shuts it and prevents meat and drink from going down that way;) had not unavoidable suffocation ensued? And who can number the instances that might be given besides? Now when there is a concurrence of so many things absolutely necessary, (concerning which the common saying is as applicable, more frequently wont to be applied to matters of morality, "Goodness is from the concurrence of all causes, evil, from any defect,") *each* so aptly and opportunely serving its own proper use, and *all*, one common end, certainly to say that so manifold, so regular and stated a subserviency to that end, and the end itself, were undesigned, and things casually fell out thus, is to say we know or care not what.

We will only, before we close this consideration, concerning the mere frame of a human body, (which hath been so hastily and superficially proposed,) offer a supposition which is no more strange (excluding the vulgar notion by which nothing is strange, but what is not common) than the thing itself, as it actually is; namely, That the whole more external covering of the body of a man were made, instead of skin and flesh, of some very transparent substance, flexible, but clear as very crystal; through which, and the other more inward (and as transparent) integuments or enfoldings, we could plainly perceive the situation and order of all the internal parts, and how they each of them perform their distinct offices: if we could discern the continual motion of the blood, how it is conveyed, by its proper conduits, from its first source and

* Non prodest cibus neque corpori accedit, qui statim sumptus emittitur. Seneca.

fountain, partly downwards to the lower entrails, (if rather it ascend not from thence, as at least, what afterwards becomes blood doth,) partly upwards, to its admirable elaboratory, the heart; where it is refined and furnished with fresh vital spirits, and so transmitted thence by the distinct vessels prepared for this purpose: could we perceive the curious contrivance of those little doors, by which it is let in and out, on this side and on that; the order and course of its circulation, its most commodious distribution by two social channels, or conduit-pipes, that every where accompany one another throughout the body: could we discern the curious artifice of the brain, its ways of purgation; and were it possible to pry into the secret chambers and receptacles of the less or more pure spirits there; perceive their manifold conveyances, and the rare texture of that net, commonly called the *wonderful one:* could we behold the veins, arteries, and nerves, all of them arising from their proper and distinct originals; and their orderly dispersion for the most part, by pairs and conjugations, on this side and that, from the middle of the back; with the curiously wrought branches, which, supposing these to appear duly diversified, as so many more duskish strokes in this transparent frame, they would be found to make throughout the whole of it; were every smaller fibre thus made at once discernible; especially those innumerable threads into which the spinal marrow is distributed at the bottom of the back: and could we, through the same medium, perceive those numerous little machines made to serve unto voluntary motions, (which in the whole body are computed, by some, * to the number of four hundred and thirty, or thereabouts, or so many of them as according to the present supposition could possibly come in view,) and discern their composition; their various and elegant figures—round, square, long, triangular, &c. and behold them do their offices, and see how they ply to and fro, and work in their respective places, as any motion is to be performed by them: were all these things, I say, thus made liable to an easy and distinct view, who would not admiringly cry out, *How fearfully and wonderfully am I made?* And sure there is no man sober, who would not, upon such a sight, pronounce that man mad, that should suppose such a production to have been a mere undesigned casualty. At least, if there be any thing in the world that may be thought to carry sufficiently convincing evidences in it, of its having been made

* Riolanus.

industriously, and on purpose, not by chance, would not this composition, thus offered to view, be esteemed to do so much more? Yea, and if it did only bear upon it characters equally evidential, of wisdom and design, with what doth certainly so, though in the lowest degree, it were sufficient to evince our present purpose. For if one such instance as this would bring the matter no higher than to a bare equality, that would at least argue a maker of man's body, as wise, and as properly designing, as the artificer of any such slighter piece of workmanship, that may yet, certainly, be concluded the effect of skill and design. And then, enough might be said, from other instances, to manifest him unspeakably superior. And that the matter would be brought, at least, to an equality, upon the supposition now made, there can be no doubt, if any one be judge that hath not abjured his understanding and his eyes together. And what then, if we lay aside that supposition, (which only somewhat gratifies fancy and imagination,) doth that alter the case? Or is there the less of wisdom and contrivance expressed in this work of forming man's body, only for that it is not so easily and suddenly obvious to our sight? Then we might with the same reason say, concerning some curious piece of carved work, that is thought fit to be kept locked up in a cabinet, when we see it, that there was admirable workmanship shewn in doing it; but as soon as it is again shut up in its repository, that there was none at all. Inasmuch as we speak of the objective characters of wisdom and design, that are in the thing itself, (though they must some way or other come under our notice, otherwise we can be capable of arguing nothing from them, yet,) since we have sufficient assurance that there really are such characters in the structure of the body of man as have been mentioned, and a thousand more than have been thought necessary to be mentioned here; it is plain that the greater or less facility of finding them out, so that we be at a certainty that they are, (whether by the slower and more gradual search of our own eyes, or by relying upon the testimony of such as have purchased themselves that satisfaction by their own labour and diligence,) is merely accidental to the thing itself we are discoursing of; and neither adds to, nor detracts from, the rational evidence of the present argument. Or if it do either, the more abstruse paths of divine wisdom in this, as in other things, do rather recommend it the more to our adoration and reverence, than if every thing were obvious, and lay open to the first glance of a more careless eye. The things which we are sure (or may be, if we

do not shut our eyes) the wise Maker of this world hath done, do sufficiently serve to assure us that he could have done this also; that is, have made every thing in the frame and shape of our bodies conspicuous in the way but now supposed, if he had thought it fit. He hath done greater things. And since he hath not thought *that* fit, we may be bold to say, the doing of it would signify more trifling, and less design. It gives us a more amiable and comely representation of the Being we are treating of, that his works are less for ostentation than use; and that his wisdom and other attributes appear in them rather to the instruction of sober, than the gratification of vain minds.

We may therefore confidently conclude, that the figuration of the human body carries with it as manifest, unquestionable evidences of design, as any piece of human artifice, that most confessedly, in the judgment of any man, doth so; and therefore had as certainly a designing cause. We may challenge the world to shew a disparity, unless it be that the advantage is unconceivably great on our side. For would not any one that hath not abandoned at once both his reason* and his modesty, be ashamed to confess and admire the skill that is shewn in making a statue, or the picture of a man, that (as one ingeniously says) is but the shadow of his skin, and deny the wisdom that appears in the composure of his body itself, that contains so numerous and so various engines and instruments for sundry purposes in it, as that it is become an art, and a very laudable one, but to discover and find out the art and skill that are shewn in the contrivance and formation of them?

IV. It is in the mean time strange to consider from how different and contrary causes it proceeds, that the wise Contriver of this fabric hath not his due acknowledgments on the account of it. For with some, it proceeds from their supine and drowsy ignorance, and that they little know or think what prints and footsteps of a Deity they carry about them, in their bone and flesh, in every part and vein and limb. With others, (as if too much learning had made them mad, or an excess of light had struck them into a mopish blindness,) these things are so well known and seen, so common and obvious, that they are the less regarded. And because they can give a very punctual account *that things are so*, they think it, now, not worth the considering, *how they come to be so*. They can trace all these hidden paths and footsteps, and therefore all seems very

* Parker Tentam. Physico-Theolog.

easy, and they give over wondering. As they that would detract from Columbus's acquists of glory by the discovery he had made of America,* by pretending the achievement was easy; whom he ingeniously rebuked, by challenging them to make an egg stand erect, alone, upon a plain table; which when none of them could do, he only by a gentle bruising of one end of it makes it stand on the table without other support, and then tells them this was more easy than his voyage to America, now they had seen it done; before, they knew not how to go about it. Some may think the contrivance of the body of a man, or other animal, easy, now they know it; but had they been to project such a model without a pattern, or any thing leading thereto, how miserable a loss had they been at! How easy a confession had been drawn from them of the finger of God, and how silent a submission to his just triumph over their, and all human wit, when the most admired performances in this kind, by any mortal, have been only faint and infinitely distant imitations of the works of God! As is to be seen in the so much celebrated exploits of Posidonius, Regiomontanus, and others of this sort.

V. And now if any should be either so incurably blind as not to perceive, or so perversely wilful as not to acknowledge, an appearance of wisdom in the frame and figuration of the body of an animal (peculiarly of man) more than equal to what appears in any the most exquisite piece of human artifice, and which no wit of man can ever fully imitate; although, as hath been said, an acknowledged equality would suffice to evince a wise maker thereof, yet because it is the existence of God we are now speaking of, and that it is therefore not enough to evince, but to magnify, the wisdom we would ascribe to him; we shall pass from the parts and frame, to the consideration of the more principal powers and functions of terrestrial creatures; ascending from such as agree to the less perfect orders of these, to those of the more perfect, namely, of man himself. And surely to have been the Author of faculties that shall enable to such functions, will evidence a wisdom that defies our imitation, and will dismay the attempt of it.

We begin with that of *growth*. Many sorts of rare engines we acknowledge contrived by the wit of man, but who hath ever made one that could grow, or that had in it a self-improving power? A tree, an herb, a pile of grass, may upon this account challenge all the world to make such a thing. That is,

* Archbishop Abbot's Geograph.

to implant the power of growing into any thing to which it *doth not* natively belong, or to make a thing to which *it doth*.

By what art would they make a seed? And which way would they inspire it with a seminal form? And they that think this whole globe of the earth was compacted by the casual (or fatal) coalition of particles of matter, by what magic would they conjure up so many to come together as should make one clod? We vainly hunt with a lingering mind after miracles; if we did not more vainly mean by them nothing else but novelties, we are compassed about with such. And the greatest miracle is, that we see them not. You with whom the daily productions of nature (as you call it) are so cheap, see if you can do the like. Try your skill upon a rose. Yea, but you must have pre-existent matter? But can you ever prove the Maker of the world had so, or even defend the possibility of uncreated matter? And suppose they had the free grant of all the matter between the crown of their head and the moon, could they tell what to do with it, or how to manage it, so as to make it yield them one single flower, that they might glory in, as their own production?

And what mortal man, that hath reason enough about him to be serious, and to think a while, would not even be amazed at the miracle of *nutrition?* Or that there are things in the world capable of nourishment? Or who would attempt an imitation here, or not despair to perform any thing like it? That is, to make any nourishable thing. Are we not here infinitely outdone? Do we not see ourselves compassed about with wonders, and are we not ourselves such, in that we see, and are creatures, from all whose parts there is a continual defluxion, and yet that receive a constant gradual supply and renovation, by which they are continued in the same state? As the bush burning, but not consumed. It is easy to give an artificial frame to a thing that shall gradually decay and waste till it be quite gone, and disappear. You could raise a structure of snow, that would soon do that. But can your manual skill compose a thing that, like our bodies, shall be continually melting away, and be continually repaired, through so long a tract of time? Nay, but you can tell how it is done; you know in what method, and by what instruments, food is received, concocted, separated, and so much as must serve for nourishment, turned into chyle, and that into blood, first grosser, and then more refined, and that distributed into all parts for this purpose. Yea, and what then? Therefore you are as wise as your Maker. Could you have made such a

thing as the stomach, a liver, a heart, a vein, an artery? Or are you so very sure what the digestive quality is? Or if you are, and know what things best serve to maintain, to repair, or strengthen it, who implanted that quality? Both where it is so immediately useful, or in the other things you would use for the service of that? Or how, if such things had not been prepared to your hand, would you have devised to persuade the particles of matter into so useful and happy a conjuncture, as that such a quality might result? Or, (to speak more suitably to the most,) how, if you had not been shewn the way, would you have thought it were to be done, or which way would you have gone to work, to turn meat and drink into flesh and blood?

Nor is *propagation of their own kind*, by the creatures that have that faculty implanted in them, less admirable, or more possible to be imitated by any human device. Such productions stay in their first descent. Who can, by his own contrivance, find out a way of making any thing that can produce another like itself. What machine did ever man invent, that had this power? And the ways and means by which it is done, are such (though he that can do all things well knew how to compass his ends by them) as do exceed not our understanding only, but our wonder.

And what shall we say of *spontaneous motion*, wherewith we find also creatures endowed that are so mean and despicable in our eyes, (as well as ourselves,) that is, that so silly a thing as a fly, a gnat, &c. should have a power in it to move itself, or stop its own motion, at its own pleasure? How far have all attempted imitations in this kind fallen short of this perfection? And how much more excellent a thing is the smallest and most contemptible insect, than the most admired machine we ever heard or read of; (as Archytas Tarentinus's dove so anciently celebrated, or more lately Regiomontanus's fly, or his eagle, or any the like;) not only as having this *peculiar power*, above any thing of this sort, but as having the *sundry other powers*, besides, meeting in it, whereof these are wholly destitute?

And should we go on to instance further in the several powers of *sensation*, both external and internal, the various instincts, appetitions, passions, sympathies, antipathies, the powers of memory, (and we might add of speech,) that we find the inferior orders of creatures either generally furnished with, or some of them, as to this last, disposed unto. How should we even over-do the present business; and too needlessly insult over human wit, (which we must suppose to have already yielded

the cause,) in challenging it to produce and offer to view a hearing, seeing engine, that can imagine, talk, is capable of hunger, thirst, of desire, anger, fear, grief, &c. as its own creature, concerning which it may glory and say, I have done this?

It is so admirable a performance, and so ungainsayable an evidence of skill and wisdom, with much labour and long travail of mind, a busy, restless agitation of working thoughts, the often renewal of frustrated attempts, the varying of defeated trials; this way and that, at length to hit upon, and by much pains, and with a slow, gradual progress, by the use of who can tell how many sundry sorts of instruments or tools, managed by more (possibly) than a few hands, by long hewing, hammering, turning, filing, to compose one only single machine of such a frame and structure, as that by the frequent reinforcement of a skilful hand, it may be capable of some (and that, otherwise, but a very short-lived) motion? And it is no argument, or effect of wisdom, so easily and certainly, without labour, error, or disappointment, to frame both so infinite a variety of kinds, and so innumerable individuals of every such kind of living creatures, that cannot only, with the greatest facility, move themselves with so many sorts of motion, downwards, upwards, to and fro, this way or that, with a progressive or circular, a swifter or a slower motion, at their own pleasure; but can also grow, propagate, see, hear, desire, joy, &c. Is this no work of wisdom, but only either blind fate or chance? Of how strangely perverse and odd a complexion is that understanding, (if yet it may be called an understanding,) that can make this judgment!

VI. And they think they have found out a rare knack, and that gives a great relief to their diseased minds, who have learned to call the bodies of living creatures, (even the human not excepted,) by way of diminution, *machines*, or a sort of automatous engines.

But how little cause there is to hug or be fond of this fancy, would plainly appear, if we would allow ourselves leisure to examine with *how small pretence* this appellation is so placed and applied: and, *next*, if it be applied rightly, to *how little purpose* it is alleged; or that it signifies nothing to the exclusion of divine wisdom from the formation of them.

And for the *first*, because we know not a better, let it be considered how defective and unsatisfying the account is, which the great* and justly admired master in this faculty gives,

* D. Cartes de passionibus animæ. part 1. atque alibi.

how divers of those things, which he would have to be so, are performed only in the mechanical way.

For though his ingenuity must be acknowledged, in his modest exception of some nobler operations belonging to ourselves from coming under those rigid necessitating laws, yet certainly, to the severe inquiry of one not partially addicted to the sentiments of so great a wit, because they were his, it would appear there are great defects, and many things yet wanting, in the account which is given us of some of the meaner of those functions, which he would attribute only to organized matter, or (to use his own expression) to the conformation of the members of the body, and the course of the spirits, excited by the heat of the heart, &c.

For howsoever accurately he describes the instruments and the way, his account seems very little satisfying of the principle, either of spontaneous motion, or of sensation.

As to *spontaneous motion*, though it be very apparent that the muscles, seated in that opposite posture wherein they are mostly found paired throughout the body, the nerves and the animal spirits in the brain, and (suppose we) that *glandule* seated in the inmost part of it, are the instruments of the motion of the limbs and the whole body; yet, what are all these to the prime causation, or much more, to the spontaneity of this motion? And whereas, with us, (who are acknowledged to have such a faculty independent on the body,) an act of will doth so manifestly contribute, so that, when we will, our body is moved with so admirable facility, and we feel not the cumbersome weight of an arm to be lifted up, or of our whole corporeal bulk, to be moved this way or that, by a slower or swifter motion. Yea, and when as also, if we will, we can, on the sudden, in a very instant, start up out of the most composed, sedentary posture, and put ourselves, upon occasion, into the most violent course of motion or action. But if we have no such will, though we have the same agile spirits about us, we find no difficulty to keep in a posture of rest; and are, for the most part, not sensible of any endeavour or urgency of those active particles, as if they were hardly to be restrained from putting us into motion; and against a reluctant act of our will, we are not moved but with great difficulty to them, and that will give themselves, and us, the trouble. This being, I say, the case with us; and it being also obvious to our observation, that it is so very much alike, in these mentioned respects, with brute creatures, how inconceivable is it, that the directive principle of their motions, and

ours, should be so vastly and altogether unlike? (whatsoever greater perfection is required, with us, as to those more noble and perfect functions and operations which are found to belong to us.) That is, that *in us*, an act of will should signify so very much, and be, for the most part, necessary to the beginning, the continuing, the stopping, or the varying of our motions; and *in them*, nothing like it, nor any thing else besides, only that corporeal principle* which he assigns as common to them and us, the continual heat in the heart, (which he calls a sort of fire,) nourished by the blood of the veins; the instruments of motion already mentioned, and the various representations and impressions of external objects, as there and elsewhere† he expresses himself! upon which last, (though much is undoubtedly to be attributed to it,) that so main a stress should be laid, as to the diversifying of motion, seems strange; when we may observe so various motions of some silly creatures, as of a fly in our window, while we cannot perceive, and can scarce imagine, any change in external objects about them: yea, a swarm of flies, so variously frisking and plying to and fro, some this way, others that, with a thousand diversities and interferings in their motion, and some resting; while things are in the same state, externally, to them all. So that what should cause, or cease, or so strangely vary such motions, is from thence, or any thing else he hath said, left unimaginable. As it is much more, how, in creatures of much strength, as a bear or a lion, a paw should be moved sometimes so gently, and sometimes with so mighty force, only by mere mechanism, without any directive principle, that is not altogether corporeal. But most of all, how the strange regularity of motion in some creatures, as of the spider in making its web, and the like, should be owing to no other than such causes as he hath assigned of the motions in general of brute creatures. And what though some motions of our own seem wholly involuntary, (as that of our eye-lids, in the case which he supposes,) doth it therefore follow they must proceed from a principle‡ only corporeal, as if our soul had no other act belonging to it, but that of willing? Which he doth not downright say; but that it is its only, or its chief act: and if it be its chief act only, what hinders but that such a motion may proceed from an act that is not chief? Or that it may have a power that may, sometimes, step forth into act (and in greater matters

* De Passion. part. 1. art. 8.

† Princip. Philosoph. Dioptric. c. 4. Dissertat. de method.

‡ De Pass. art. 18.

than that) without any formal, deliberated command or direction of our will? So little reason is there to conclude, that all our motions* common to us with beasts, or even their motions themselves, depend on nothing else than the conformation of the members, and the course which the spirits, excited by the heat of the heart, do naturally follow, in the brain, the nerves, and the muscles, after the same manner with the motion of an automaton, &c.

But as to the matter of *sensation*, his account seems much more defective and unintelligible, that is, how it should be performed (as he supposes every thing common to us with beasts may be) without a soul. For, admit that it be (as who doubts but it is) by the instruments which he assigns, we are still to seek what is the sentient, or what useth these instruments, and doth sentire or exercise sense by them. That is, suppose it be performed in the brain, † and that (as he says) by the help of the nerves, which from thence, like small strings, ‡ are stretched forth unto all the other members; suppose we have the three things to consider in the nerves, which he recites—their interior substance, which extends itself like very slender threads from the brain to the extremities of all the other members into which they are knit; the very thin little skins which inclose these, and which, being continued with those that inwrap the brain, do compose the little pipes which contain these threads; and lastly, the animal spirits which are conveyed down from the brain through these pipes—yet which of these is most subservient unto sense? That he undertakes elsewhere § to declare, namely, that we are not to think (which we also suppose) some nerves to serve for sense, others for motion only, as some have thought, but that the inclosed spirits serve for the motion of the members, and those little threads (also inclosed) for sense. Are we yet any nearer our purpose? Do these small threads sentire? Are these the things that ultimately receive and discern the various impressions of objects? And since they are all of one sort of substance, how comes it to pass that some of them are seeing threads, others hearing threads, others tasting, &c. Is it from the diverse and commodious figuration of the organs unto which these descend from the brain? But though we acknowledge and admire the cu-

* As art. 16.
† Princip. Philosoph. Sect. 189.
‡ De Passion. art. 11.
§ Dioptr. c. 4. S. 4, 5.

rious and exquisite formation of those organs, and their most apt usefulness (as organs, or instruments) to the purposes for which they are designed, yet what do they signify, without a proportionably apt and able agent to use them, or percipient to entertain and judge of the several notices, which by them are only transmitted from external things? That is, suppose we a drop of ever so pure and transparent liquor, or let there be three, diversely tinctured or coloured, and (lest they mingle) kept asunder by their distinct, infolding coats; let these encompass one the other, and together compose one little shining globe: are we satisfied that now this curious, pretty ball can see? Nay, suppose we it ever so conveniently situate; suppose we the fore-mentioned strings fastened to it, and these, being hollow, well replenished with as pure air or wind or gentle flame as you can imagine; yea, and all the before-described little threads to boot; can it yet do the feat? Nay, suppose we all things else to concur that we can suppose, except a living principle, (call that by what name you will,) and is it not still as incapable of the act of seeing, as a ball of clay or a pebble stone? Or can the substance of the brain itself perform that or any other act of sense, (for it is superfluous to speak distinctly of the rest,) any more than the pulp of an apple or a dish of curds? So that, trace this matter whither you will, within the compass of your assigned limits, and you are still at the same loss: range through the whole body, and what can you find but flesh and bones, marrow and blood, strings and threads, humour and vapour; and which of these is capable of sense? These are your materials and such like; order them as you will, put them into what method you can devise, and except you can make it *live*, you cannot make it so much as *feel*, much less perform all other acts of sense besides, unto which, these tools alone seem as unproportionable, as a plough-share to the most curious sculpture, or a pair of tongs to the most melodious music.

But how much more inconceivable it is, that the figuration and concurrence of the fore-mentioned organs can alone suffice to produce the several passions of love, fear, anger, &c. whereof we find so evident indications in brute creatures it is enough but to hint. And (but that all persons do not read the same books) it were altogether unnecessary to have said so much, after so plain demonstration * already extant, that matter, how-

* In Doctor More's Immortality of the Soul.

soever modified, any of the mentioned ways is incapable of sense.

Nor would it seem necessary to attempt any thing in this kind, in particular and direct opposition to the very peculiar sentiments of this most ingenious author, (as he will undoubtedly be reckoned in all succeeding time,) who, when he undertakes to shew what *sense* is, and how it is performed, makes it the proper business of the soul, comprehends it under the name of *cogitation*;* naming himself a thinking thing, adds by way of question, What is that? and answers, A thing doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, willing, nilling, and also imagining, and exercising sense; says † expressly it is evident to all that it is the soul that exercises sense, not the body, ‡ in as direct words as the so much celebrated Poet of old. The only wonder is, that under this general name of cogitation he denies it unto brutes; under which name, he may be thought less fitly to have included it, than to have affirmed them incapable of any thing to which that name ought to be applied; as he doth not only affirm, but esteems himself by most firm reasons to have proved. §

And yet that particular reason seems a great deal more pious than it is cogent, which he gives for his choosing his particular way of differencing brutes from human creatures, namely, lest any prejudice should be done to the doctrine of the human soul's immortality; there being nothing, as he truly says, that doth more easily turn off weak minds from the path of virtue, than if they should think the souls of brutes to be of the same nature with our own; and therefore that nothing remains to be hoped or feared after this life, more by us than by flies or pismires. For surely there were other ways of providing against that danger, besides that of denying them so much as sense, (other than merely organical, ‖ as he somewhere alleviates the harshness of that position, but without telling us what useth these organs,) and the making them nothing else but well-formed machines.

But yet if we should admit the propriety of this appellation, and acknowledge (the thing itself intended to be signified by it) that all the powers belonging to mere brutal nature are purely mechanical, and no more.

To what purpose, *secondly*, is it here alleged, or what can it be understood to signify? What is lost from our cause

* Princip. Phil. part. 4. 189. † Medit. 2. ‡ Dioptr. c. 4.
§ Resp. sextæ. Dissert. De Method. c. 5. ‖ Resp. sextæ.

by it? And what have atheists whereof to glory? For was the contrivance of these machines their's? Were they the authors of this rare invention, or of any thing like it? Or can they shew any product of human device and wit, that shall be capable of vying with the strange powers of those machines? Or can they imagine what so highly exceeds all human skill, to have fallen by chance, and without any contrivance or design at all, into a frame capable of such powers and operations?

If they be machines, they are (as that free-spirited author speaks) to be considered as a sort of machine * made by the hand of God, which it is by infinite degrees better ordered, and hath in it more admirable motions, than any that could ever have been formed by the art of man. Yea, and we might add, so little disadvantage would accrue to the present cause (whatever might to some other) by this concession, that rather (if it were not a wrong to the cause, which justly disdains we should allege any thing false or uncertain for its support) this would add much, we will not say to its victory, but to its triumph, that we did acknowledge them nothing else than mere mechanical contrivances. For, since they must certainly either be such, or have each of them a soul to animate, and enable them to their several functions; it seems a much more easy performance, and is more conceivable, and within the nearer reach of human apprehension, that they should be furnished with such a one, than be made capable of so admirable operations without it; and the former (though it were not a surer) were a more amazing, unsearchable, and less comprehensible discovery of the most transcendent wisdom, than the latter.

VII. But because whatsoever comes under the name of cogitation, properly taken, is assigned to some higher cause than mechanism; and that there are operations belonging to man, which lay claim to a reasonable soul, as the immediate principle and author of them; we have yet this further step to advance, that is, to consider the most apparent evidence we have of a wise, designing agent, in the powers and nature of this more excellent, and, among things more obvious to our notice, the noblest of his productions.

And were it not for the slothful neglect of the most to study themselves, we should not here need to recount unto men the common and well-known abilities and excellencies which pe-

* Dissert. de Method. Sect. 5.

culiarly belong to their own nature. They might take notice, without being told, that first, as to their *intellectual faculty*, they have somewhat about them, that can think, understand, frame notions of things; that can rectify or supply the false or defective representations which are made to them by their external senses and fancies; that can conceive of things far above the reach and sphere of sense, the moral good or evil of actions or inclinations, what there is in them of rectitude or pravity; whereby they can animadvert, and cast their eye inward upon themselves; observe the good or evil acts or inclinations, the knowledge, ignorance, dulness, vigour, tranquillity, trouble, and, generally, the perfections or imperfections, of their own minds; that can apprehend the general natures of things, the future existence of what, yet, is not, with the future appearance of that, to us, which, as yet, appears not.

Of which last sort of power, the confident assertion, "No man can have a conception of the future," (Hobbs's Human Nature,) needs not, against our experience, make us doubt; especially being enforced by no better, than that *pleasant* reason there subjoined, *for, the future is not yet;* that is to say, because it is future; and so (which is all this reason amounts to) we *cannot conceive it*, because *we cannot*. For though our conceptions of former things guide us in forming notions of what is future, yet sure our conception of any thing as future, is much another sort of conception from what we have of the same thing as past, as appears from its different effects; for if an object be apprehended good, we conceive of it as past with sorrow, as future with hope and joy; if evil, with joy as past, with fear and sorrow as future. And (which above all the rest discovers and magnifies the intellectual power of the human soul) that they can form a conception, howsoever imperfect, of this absolutely perfect Being, whereof we are discoursing. Which even they that acknowledge not its existence, cannot deny; except they will profess themselves blindly, and at a venture, to deny they know not what, or what they have not so much as thought of.

They may take notice of their *power of comparing things*, of discerning and making a judgment of their agreements and disagreements, their proportions and dispositions to one another; of affirming or denying this or that, concerning such or such things; and of pronouncing, with more or less confidence, concerning the truth or falsehood of such affirmations or negations.

And moreover, of their *power of arguing*, and inferring one thing from another, so as from one plain and evident principle, to draw forth a long chain of consequences, that may be discerned to be linked therewith.

They have withal to consider the liberty and the large capacity of *the human will*, which, when it is itself, rejects the dominion of any other than the supreme Lord's, and refuses satisfaction in any other than the supreme and most comprehensive good.

And upon even so hasty and transient a view of a thing furnished with such powers and faculties, we have sufficient occasion to bethink ourselves, How came such a thing as this into being; whence did it spring, or to what original doth it owe itself? More particularly we have here two things to be discoursed of—That, notwithstanding so high excellencies, the soul of man doth yet appear to be a caused being, that sometime had a beginning.—That, by them, it is sufficiently evident, that it owes itself to a wise and intelligent cause.

As to the *first* of these, we need say the less, because *that sort* of atheists with whom we have chiefly now to do, deny not human souls to have had a beginning, as supposing them to be produced by the bodies they animate, by the same generation, and that such generation did sometimes begin; that only rude and wildly moving matter was from eternity; and that by infinite alterations and commixtures in that eternity, it fell at last into this orderly frame and state wherein things now are, and became prolific, so as to give beginning to the several sorts of living things which do now continue to propagate themselves; the mad folly of which random fancy we have been so largely contending against hitherto. The *other sort*, who were for an eternal succession of generations, have been sufficiently refuted by divers others, and partly by what hath been already said in this discourse; and we may further meet with them ere it be long. We in the mean time find not any professing atheism, to make human souls, as such, necessary and self-originate beings.

Yet it is requisite to consider not only what persons of atheistical persuasions *have said*, but what also they possibly *may say*. And moreover, some, that have been remote from atheism, have been prone, upon the contemplation of the excellencies of the human soul, to over-magnify, yea and even no less than deify it. It is therefore needful to say somewhat in this matter. For if nothing of direct and downright atheism had been designed, the rash hyperboles, as we will cha-

ritably call them, and unwarrantable rhetorications of these latter, should they obtain to be looked upon and received as severe and strict assertions of truth, were equally destructive of religion, as the others' more strangely bold and avowed opposition to it. *

Such, I mean, as have spoken of the souls of men as parts of God, one thing with him; a particle of divine breath; ἀποσπασμα ἑαυτῆ—*an extract or derivation of himself;* that have not feared to apply to them his most peculiar attributes, or say that of them, which is most appropriate and incommunicably belonging to him alone. Nay, to give them his very name, and say in plain words they were God. †

Now it would render *a temple* alike insignificant, to suppose no worshipper, as to suppose none who should be worshipped. And what should be the worshipper, when our souls are thought the same thing with what should be the object of our worship? But methinks, when we consider their necessitous, indigent state, their wants and cravings, their pressures and groans, their grievances and complaints, we should find enough to convince us they are not the self-originate or self-sufficient being. And might even despair any thing should be plain and easy to them, with whom it is a difficulty to distinguish themselves from God. Why are they in a state which they dislike? Wherefore are they not full and satisfied? Why do they wish and complain? Is this God-like? But if any have a doubt hanging in their minds concerning the unity of souls with one another, or with the soul of the world, let them read what is already extant: and supposing them, thereupon, distinct beings: there needs no more to prove them not to be necessary, independent, uncaused

* Seneca. Epistle 92. Hor. Serm. Marcus Antoninus.

† The Pythagoreans, concerning whom it is said, they were wont to admonish one another to take heed, Μὴ διασπᾶν τον, εν ἑαυτοῖς, Θεὸν—*lest they should rent God in themselves.* Jamblich. de vita. Pythag. Plato, who undertakes to prove the immortality of the soul by such arguments as, if they did conclude any thing, would conclude it to be God; that it is the fountain, the principle πηγὴ, καὶ ἀρχὴ of motion; and adds, that the principle is unbegotten, &c. in Phædro. Makes it the cause of all things, and the ruler of all, De Leg. l. 10. though his words there seem meant of the soul of the world. Concerning which soul, afterwards, inquiring whether all ought not to account it God, he answers, Yes certainly, except any one be come to extreme madness. And whether an identity were not imagined of our souls, with that of the world, or with God, is too much left in doubt, both as to him and some of his followers; to say nothing of modern enthusiasts.

ones, * than their subjection to so frequent changes; their ignorance, doubts, irresolution, and gradual progress to knowledge, certainty, and stability in their purposes; their very being united with these bodies in which they have been but a little while, as we all know; whereby they undergo no small change, (admitting them to have been pre-existent,) and wherein they experience so many. Yea, whether those changes import any immutation of their very essence or no, the repugnancy being so plainly manifest of the very terms, *necessary* and *changeable*. And inasmuch as it is so evident that a necessary being can receive no accession to itself; that it must always have, or keep itself, after the same manner, and in the same state; that if it be necessarily such, or such, (as we cannot conceive it to be, but we must, in our own thoughts, affix to it some determinate state or other,) it must be eternally such, and ever in that particular unchanged state.

Therefore be the perfection of our souls as great as our most certain knowledge of them can possibly allow us to suppose it, it is not yet *so great*, but that we must be constrained to confess them no necessary, self-originate beings, and, by consequence, dependent ones, that owe themselves to some cause.

Nor yet, *secondly*, (that we may pass over to the other strangely distant extreme,) is the perfection of our souls *so little*, as to require less than an intelligent cause, endowed with the wisdom which we assert and challenge unto the truly necessary, uncaused Being. Which, because he hath no other rival or competitor for the glory of this production, than only the fortuitous jumble of the blindly-moving particles of matter, directs our inquiry to this single point: Whose image does the thing produced bear? Or which does it more resemble? *Stupid, senseless, inactive matter*, (or at the best only supposed moving, though no man, upon the atheists' terms, can imagine how it came to be so,) or the *active, intelligent Being*, whom we affirm the cause of all things, and who hath peculiarly entitled himself, *the Father of spirits*.

That is, we are to consider whether the powers and operations belonging to the reasonable soul do not plainly argue—That it neither rises from, nor is, mere matter; whence it will be consequent, it must have an efficient, diverse from matter—and, That it owes itself to an intelligent efficient.

* Dr. More's Poem. Antimonopsuchia. His Immortality of the Soul. Mr. Baxter's Appendix to the Reasons of Christian Religion, &c.

1. As to the former, we need not deal distinctly and severally concerning their original and their nature. For if they are not mere matter, it will be evident enough they do not arise from thence.

(1.) So that all will be summed up in this inquiry, Whether reason can agree to matter considered alone, or by itself?

But here the case requires closer discourse. For, in order to this inquiry, it is requisite the subject be determined we inquire about. It hath been commonly taken for granted, that all substance is either *matter*, or *mind;* when yet it hath not been agreed what is the distinct notion of the one or the other. And for the stating their difference, there is herein both an apparent difficulty and necessity.

A *difficulty;* for the ancient difference, that the former is extended, having parts lying without each other; the latter unextended, having no parts; is now commonly exploded, and, as it seems, reasonably enough; both because we scarce know how to impose it upon ourselves, to conceive of a mind or spirit that is unextended, or that hath no parts; and that, on the other hand, the atoms of matter, strictly taken, must also be unextended, and be without parts. And the difficulty of assigning the proper difference between these two, is further evident, from what we experience how difficult it is to form any clear distinct notion of substance itself, so to be divided into matter and mind, stripped of all its attributes. * Though, as that celebrated author also speaks, we can be surer of nothing, than that there is a real somewhat, that sustains those attributes.

Yet also, who sees not a *necessity* of assigning a difference? For how absurd is it, to affirm, deny, or inquire, of what belongs, or belongs not, to matter, or mind, if it be altogether unagreed, what we mean by the one, or the other.

That the former, speaking of any continued portion of matter, hath parts actually separable; the other being admitted to have parts too, but that cannot be actually separated; with the power of self-contraction, and self-dilatation, ascribed to this latter, denied of the former, seem as intelligible differences, and as little liable to exception, as any we can think of. Besides what we observe of dulness, inactivity, insensibility, in one sort of substance; and of vigour, activity, capacity of sensation, and spontaneous motion, with what we can conceive

* As is to be seen in that accurate discourse of Mr. Locke. His Essay on the Human Understanding, published since this was first written.

of self-vitality, in this latter sort; that is, that whereas matter is only capable of having life imparted to it, from somewhat that lives of itself, created mind or spirit, though depending for its being on the supreme cause, hath life essentially included in that being, so that it is inseparable from it, and it is the same thing to it, to live, and to be. But a merely materiate being, if it live, borrows its life, as a thing foreign to it, and separable from it.

But if, instead of such distinction, we should shortly and at the next have pronounced, that as mind is a cogitant substance, matter is incogitant; how would this have squared with our present inquiry? What antagonist would have agreed with us upon this state of the question? that is, in effect, whether *that* can reason or think, that is incapable of reason or thought? Such, indeed, as have studied more to hide a bad meaning, than express a good one, have confounded the terms *matter* or *body*, and *substance*. But take we matter as contradistinguished to mind and spirit, as above described: and it is concerning *this* that we intend this inquiry.

And here we shall therefore wave the consideration of their conceits, concerning the manner of the first origination of men, who thought their whole being was only a production of the earth. Whereof the philosophical account deserves as much laughter, instead of confutation, as any the most fabulously poetical: that is, how they were formed (as also the other animals) in certain little bags, or wombs of the earth, out of which, when they grew ripe, they broke forth, &c. *Gassendi Epicur. Syntag.*

And only consider what is said of the constitution and nature of the human soul itself; which is said Ἐξ ἀτόμων ἀυτὴν συγκεῖσθαι λειοτάτων, καὶ στρογγυλατάτων, &c.* *to be composed of the smoothest and the roundest atoms;* and which are of the neatest fashion, and every way, you must suppose, the best conditioned the whole country could afford; of a more excellent make, as there is added, than those of the fire itself. And these are the things you must know, which think, study, contemplate, frame syllogisms, make theorems, lay plots, contrive business, act the philosopher, the logician, the mathematician, statesman, and every thing else; only you may except the priest, for of him there was no need.

(2.) This therefore is our present theme, whether such things as these be capable of such, or any acts of reason, yea or no?

* Syntag. and in Epicurus's Epist. to Herodot. in Laert.

And if such a subject may admit of serious discourse; in this way it may be convenient to proceed, namely, either any such small particle, or atom (for our business is not now with Des Cartes, but Epicurus) alone, is rational, or a good convenient number of them assembled, and most happily met together. It is much to be feared the former way will not do. For we have nothing to consider in any of these atoms, in its solitary condition, besides its magnitude, its figure, and its weight, and you may add also its motion, if you could devise how it should come by it.

And now, because it is not to be thought that all atoms are rational, (for then the stump of a tree or a bundle of straw might serve to make a soul of, for aught we know, as good as the best,) it is to be considered by which of those properties an atom shall be entitled to the privilege of being rational, and the rational atoms be distinguished from the rest. Is it their peculiar magnitude or size that so far ennobles them? Epicurus would here have us believe, that the *least* are the fittest for this turn. Now if you consider how little we must suppose them generally to be, according to his account of them; (that is, that looking upon any of those little motes a stream whereof you may perceive when the sun shines in at a window, and he doubts not but many myriads of even ordinary atoms, go to the composition of any one of these scarcely discernible motes;) how sportful a contemplation were it, to suppose one of those furnished with all the powers of a reasonable soul? Though it is likely they would not laugh at the jest, that think thousands of souls might be conveniently placed upon the point of a needle. And yet, which makes the matter more admirable, that very few, except they be very carefully picked and chosen, can be found among those many myriads, but will be *too big* to be capable of rationality. Here sure the fate is very hard, of those that come nearest the size, but only, by a very little too much corpulency, happen to be excluded, as unworthy to be counted among the rational atoms. But sure if all sober reason be not utterly lost and squandered away among these little entities, it must needs be judged altogether incomprehensible, why, if upon the account of mere littleness any atom should be capable of reason, all should not be so: and then we could not but have a very rational world. At least, the difference in this point being so very small among them, and they being all so very little, methinks they should all be capable of some reason, and have only less or more of it, according as they are bigger and less. But there is little doubt, that single

property of less magnitude, will not be stood upon as the characteristical difference of rational and irrational atoms; and because their more or less gravity is reckoned necessarily and so immediately to depend on that, (for those atoms cannot be thought porous, but very closely compacted each one within itself,) this, it is likely, will as little be depended on.* And so their peculiar figure must be the more trusted to, as the differencing thing. And because there is in this respect so great a variety among this little sort of people, or *nation*, as this author somewhere calls them, (whereof he gives so punctual an account,† as if he had been the generalissimo of their armies, and were wont to view them at their rendezvous, to form them into regiments and squadrons, and appoint them to the distinct services he found them aptest for,) no doubt it was a difficulty to determine which sort of figure was to be pitched on to make up the rational regiment. But since his power was absolute, and there was none to gainsay or contradict, the round figure was judged best, and most deserving this honour. Otherwise, a reason might have been asked (and it might have been a greater difficulty to have given a good one) why some other figure might not have done as well; unless respect were had to fellow-atoms, and that it was thought, they of this figure could better associate for the present purpose; and *that* we shall consider of by and by. We now proceed on the supposition that possibly, a single atom, by the advantage of this figure, might be judged capable of this high achievement. And in that case, it would not be impertinent to inquire whether, if an atom were perfectly round, and so, very rational; but by an unexpected misadventure, it comes to have one little corner somewhere clapped on, it be hereby quite spoiled of its rationality? And again, whether one that comes somewhat near that figure, only it hath some little protuberancies upon it, might not by a little filing, or the friendly rubs of other atoms, become rational? And yet, now we think on it, of this

* Where yet it falls out somewhat crossly, that the least (and consequently the lightest) should be thought fitter to be the matter of the rational soul, because they are aptest for motion, when yet no other cause is assigned of their motion besides their gravity, which cannot but be more, as they are bigger; (for no doubt if you should try them in a pair of scales, the biggest would be found to out-weigh;) whence also it should seem to follow, that the heaviest having most in them of that which is the cause of motion, should be the most moveable, and so by consequence the biggest.

† That they are round, oblong, oval, plain, hooked, rough, smooth, bunch-backed, &c.

improvement he leaves no hope, because he tells us, though they have parts, yet they are so solidly compacted that they are by no force capable of dissolution. And so whatever their fate is in this particular, they must abide it without expectation of change. And yet, though we cannot really alter it for the better with any of them, yet we may think as favourably of the matter as we please; and for any thing that yet appears, whatever peculiar claim the round ones lay to rationality, we may judge as well; and shall not easily be disproved of any of the rest.

Upon the whole, no one of these properties alone, is likely to make a rational atom: what they will all do, meeting together, may yet seem a doubt. That is, supposing we could hit upon one single atom that is at once of a very little size, and consequently very light and nimble, and most perfectly smooth, and unexceptionably round, (and possibly there may be found a good many such,) will not this do the business? May we not now hope to have a rational sort of people among them, that is, those of this peculiar family or tribe? And yet still the matter will be found to go very hard; for if we cannot imagine or devise how any one of these properties should contribute any thing (as upon our utmost disquisition we certainly cannot) towards the power of reasoning, it is left us altogether unimaginable how all these properties together should make a rational atom! There is only one relief remaining, that is, that we add to these other properties some peculiarly-brisk sort of actual motion: (for to be barely moveable will not serve, inasmuch as all are so:) but will not actual motion, added to its being irreprehensibly little, light, and round, especially if it be a very freakish one, and made up of many odd, unexpected windings and turns, effect the business? Possibly it might do something to actual reasoning, supposing the power were there before; for who can tell but the little thing was fallen asleep, and by this means its power might be awakened into some exercise? But that it should give the power itself, is above all comprehension; and there is nothing else to give it. These that have been mentioned, being all the prime qualities that are assigned to atoms singly considered; all other that can be supposed, belonging to concrete bodies, that are composed of many of them meeting together. And therefore hither in the next place our inquiry must be directed, whether any number of atoms, definite or indefinite, being in themselves severally irrational, can become rational by association, or compose and make up a rational soul?

Hitherto it must be acknowledged we have not fought with any adversary; not having met with any that have asserted the rationality of single, corporeal atoms; yet because we know not what time may produce, and whither the distress and exigency of a desperate cause may drive the maintainers of it, it was not therefore fit to say nothing to that supposable or possible assertion, I mean possible to be asserted, howsoever impossible it is to be true. Nor yet could it well admit of any thing to be said to it, but in that ludicrous and sportful way. If we will suppose any to be so foolish, they are to be dealt with according to their folly.

But now as to this other conceit, that atoms, provided they be of the right stamp or kind, may, a competent number of them assembled together, compose a reasonable soul, is an express article of the Epicurean creed. And therefore, here, we are to deal more cautiously; not that this is any whit a wiser fancy than the other, but that the truth in this matter, is surer to meet with opposition in the minds of some persons, already formed unto that wild apprehension, and tinctured with it.

Wherefore such must be desired to consider in the first place, if they will be true disciples of Epicurus throughout, what he affirms of all atoms universally, that they must be simple, uncompounded bodies, (or, if you will, corpuscles,) not capable of division or section, by no force dissoluble, and therefore immutable, or in themselves void of any mutation.

Hereupon let it be next considered, if there were in them, those that are of the right size, shape, and weight, severally, some certain sparks or seeds of reason, (that we may make the supposition as advantageous as we can,) or dispositions thereto, yet how shall it be possible to them to communicate, or have that communion with one another, as *together* to constitute an actually and completely rational or thinking thing? If every one could bring somewhat to a common stock that might be serviceable to that purpose; how shall each one's proportion or share be imparted? They can none of them emit any thing, there can possibly be no such thing as an *effluvium* from any of them, inasmuch as they are incapable of diminution; and are themselves each of them as little as the least imaginable *effluvium*, that we would suppose to proceed from this or that particular atom. They can at the most but touch one another; penetrate, or get into one another they cannot; insomuch as if any one have a treasure in it, which is in readiness for the making up an intellective faculty or power

among them that should be common to them all; yet each one remains so locked up within itself, and is so reserved and incommunicative, that no other, much less the whole body of them, can be any jot the wiser. So that this is like to be a very dull assembly.

But then, if there be nothing of reason to be communicated, we are yet at a greater loss; for if it be said, having nothing else to communicate, they communicate themselves, what is that self? Is it a rational self? Or is every single atom that enters this composition, reason? Or is it a principle of reason? Is it a seed? Or is it a part? Is it a thought? What shall we suppose? Or what is there in the properties assigned to this sort of atoms that can bespeak it any of these? And if none of these can be supposed, what doth their association signify towards ratiocination? They are little, what doth that contribute? Therefore there may need the more of them to make a good large soul; but why must a *little thing*, devoid of reason, contribute more towards it, than another somewhat bigger? They are *light*, doth that mend the matter? They are the sooner blown away, they can the less cohere, or keep together; they are the more easily capable of dissipation, the less of keeping their places in solemn counsel. They are *round*, and exactly *smooth*. But why do they the more conveniently associate upon that account for this purpose? They cannot therefore come so close together as they might have done, had they been of various figures. They cannot, indeed, give or receive so rude touches. This signifies somewhat towards the keeping of state, but what doth it to the exercise of reason? Their being so perfectly and smoothly round, makes them the more incapable of keeping a steady station, they are the more in danger of rolling away from one another; they can upon this account lay no hold of each other. Their counsels and resolves are likely to be the more lubricous, and liable to an uncertain volubility. It is not to be imagined what a collection of individuals, only thus qualified, can do when they are come together, an assembly thus constituted. Are we hence to expect oracles, philosophical determinations, maxims of state? And since they are supposed to be so much alike, how are the mathematical atoms to be distinguished from the moral? those from the political? the contemplative from the active? Or when the assembly thinks fit to entertain itself with matters of this or that kind, what must be its different composure or posture? Into what mould or figure must it cast itself for one purpose, and into what, for another? It is hard to

imagine that these little globular bodies, that we may well suppose to be as like as one egg can be to another, should by the mere alteration of their situation, in respect of one another, (and no alteration besides can be so much as imagined among them,) make so great a change in the complexion of this assembly; so that now, it shall be disposed to seriousness, and by some transposition of the spherical particles, to mirth, now to business, and by and by to pleasure. And seeing all human souls are supposed made of the same sort of material, how are the atoms modelled in one man, and how in another? What atoms are there to dispose to this sect more, and what to another? Or if a good reason can be assigned for their difference, what shall be given for their agreement? Whence is it that there are so unquestionable, common notions every where received? Why are not all things transposed in some minds, when such a posture of the atoms as might infer it, is as supposable as any other! Yea, and since men are found not always to be of one mind with themselves, it is strange and incomprehensible, that one situation of these atoms, that constitute his soul, should dispose him to be of one opinion, and another of another. How are they to be ranged? When for the affirmative,—how for the negative? And yet a great deal more strange, that since their situation is so soon changed, and so continually changing, (the very substance of the soul being supposed nothing else than a thing very like, but a little finer than a busy and continually moving flame of fire,) any man should ever continue to be of the same opinion with himself, one quarter of an hour together; that all notions are not confounded and jumbled; that the same thing is not thought and unthought, resolved and unresolved a thousand times in a day. That is, if any thing could be thought, or resolved at all, or if this were a subject capable of framing, or receiving any sort of notion.

But still that is the greatest difficulty, how there can be such a thing as thinking, or forming of notions. The case is plain of such notions as have no relation to matter, or dependence upon external sense. For what doth that contribute to my contemplation of my own mind, and its acts and powers; to my animadversion, or knowing that I think, or will, this or that?

But besides, and more generally, what proportion is there, between a thought, and the motion of an atom? Will we appeal to our faculties, to our reason itself? And whither else will we? Is there any cognation or kindred between the ideas

we have of these things, the casual agitation of a small particle of matter, (be it as little or as round as we please to imagine,) and an act of intellection or judgment? And what if there be divers of them together? What can they do more towards the composing an intelligent thing, than many ciphers to the arithmetical composition of a number? It would be as rational to suppose a heap of dust, by long lying together, might at last become rational. Yes, these are things that have, some way or other, the power of motion; and what can they effect by that? They can frisk about, and ply to and fro, and interfere among themselves, and hit, and justle and tumble over one another, and that will contribute a great deal; about as much, we may suppose, as the shaking of such dust well in a bag, by which means it might possibly become finer and smaller something; and by continuing that action, at length rational! No; but these atoms, of which the soul is made, have a great advantage by their being disposed into a so well-contrived and fitly-organized receptacle as the body is. It is indeed true, and admirable, that the body is, as hath been before observed, so fitly framed for the purposes whereto the whole of it, and its several parts, are designed. But how unfitly is that commodious structure of it so much as mentioned, by such as will not allow themselves to own and adore the wisdom and power of its great Architect.

And what if the composure of the body be so apt and useful, so excellent in its own kind; is it so in every kind, or to all imaginable purposes? Or what purpose can we possibly imagine more remote or foreign to the composition of the body, than that the power of ratiocination should be derived thence? It might as well be said it was so made, to whirl about the sun, or to govern the motions of the moon and stars, as to confer the power of reason, or enable the soul to think, to understand, to deliberate, to will, &c. Yea, its organs, some of them, are much more proportionable to those actions, than any of them unto these. Which, though a well-habited body, while the soul remains in this imprisoned state, do less hinder, yet how doth it help? And that it might perform these acts without bodily organs, is much more apprehensible than how they can properly be said to be performed by them. And that, though they are done in the body, they would be done much better out of it.

But shall it be granted that these soul-constituting atoms, till they be (or otherwise than as they are) united with a duly organized body, are utterly destitute of any reasoning or in-

telligent power? Or are they, by themselves, apart from this grosser body, irrational? If this be not granted, the thing we intend must be argued out. Either then, they are, or they are not. If the *latter* be said, then they have it of themselves, without dependence on the organized body; and so we are fairly agreed to quit that pretence, without more ado, of their partaking reason from thence. And are only left to weigh over again what hath been already said to evince the contrary, that is, how manifestly absurd it is, to imagine that particles of matter, by their peculiar size, or weight, or shape, or motion, or all of these together; and that, whether single or associated, should be capable of reasoning. If the former be the thing which is resolved to be stuck to, that is, that they are of themselves irrational, but they become reasonable by their being united in such a prepared and organized body, this requires to be a little further considered. And to this purpose it is necessary to obviate a pitiful shift that it is possible some may think fit to use, for the avoiding the force of this dilemma; and may rely upon as a ground, why they may judge this choice the more secure; that is, that they say they are rational by dependence on the body they animate; because they are only found so united with one another there; that there they have the first coalition; there they are severed from such as serve not this turn; there they are pent in, and held together as long as its due temperament lasts; which, when it fails, they are dissipated, and so lose their great advantage for the acts of reason, which they had in such a body. What pleasure soever this may yield, it will soon appear it does them little service. For it only implies, that they have their rationality of themselves, so be it that they were together; and not immediately from the body; or any otherwise, than that they are somewhat beholding to it, for a fair occasion of being together; as if it were, else, an unlawful assembly; or that they knew not, otherwise, how to meet and hold together. They will not say that the body gives them being, for they are eternal, and self-subsisting, as they will have it. Yea and of themselves (though the case be otherwise with the Cartesian particles) undiminishable, as to their size, and, as to their figure and weight, unalterable; so that they have neither their littleness, their roundness, nor their lightness, from the body, but only their so happy meeting. Admit this, and only suppose them to be met out of the body. And why may not this be thought supposable? If they be not rational till they be met, they cannot have wit enough to scruple meeting, at

least somewhere else, than in the body. And who knows but such a chance may happen? As great as this, are by these persons supposed to have happened, before the world could have come to this pass it is now at; who can tell but such a number of the same sort of atoms (it being natural for things so much of a complexion and temper to associate and find out one another) might ignorantly, and thinking no harm, come together? And having done so, why might they not keep together? Do they need to be pent in? How are they pent in, whilst in the body? If they be disposed, they have ways enough to get out. And if they must needs be inclined to scatter when the crasis of the body fails, surely a way might be found to hem them in, if that be all, at the time of expiration, more tightly and closely, than they could be in the body. And what reason can be devised, why, being become rational, by their having been assembled in the body, they may not agree to hold together, and do so in spite of fate, or maugre all ordinary accidents, when they find it convenient to leave it? And then upon these no-way impossible suppositions, (according to their principles, so far as can be understood, with whom we have to do,) will they now be rational out of the body? Being still endowed (as they cannot but be) with the same high privileges of being little, round, and light, and being still also together; and somewhat more, it may be, at liberty, to roll and tumble, and mingle with one another, than in the body? If it be now affirmed, they will, in this case, be rational, at least as long as they hold together, then we are but where we were. And this shift hath but diverted us a little; but so, as it was easy to bring the matter, again, about, to the same point we were at before. Wherefore the shelter of the body being thus quite again forsaken, this poor expulsed crew of dislodging atoms are exposed to fight in the open air, for their rationality, against all that was said before.

But if this refuge and sanctuary of the body be not merely pretended to, but really and plainly trusted in and stuck to, then are we sincerely and honestly to consider what a body so variously organized can do, to make such a party of atoms (that of themselves are not so, singly, nor together) become rational. And surely, if the cause were not saved before, it is now deplorate, and lost without remedy. For what do they find here that can thus, beyond all expectation, improve them to so high an excellency? Is it flesh, or blood, or bones, that puts this stamp upon them? Think, what is the substance of the nobler parts, the liver, or heart, or brain, that they

should turn these, before, irrational atoms, when they fall into them, into rational, any more than if they were well soaked in a quagmire, or did insinuate themselves into a piece of soft dough? But here they meet with a benign and kindly heat and warmth, which comfortably fosters and cherishes them, till at length it hath hatched them into rational. But methinks they should be warm enough of themselves, since they are supposed so much to resemble fire. And, however, wherein do we find a flame of fire more rational, than a piece of ice? Yea but here they find a due temper of moisture as well as heat. And that surely doth not signify much; for if the common maxim be true, that the dry soul is the wisest, they might have been much wiser, if they had kept themselves out of the body. And since it is necessary the soul should consist of that peculiar sort of atoms before described; and the organical body (which must be said for distinction sake, the soul being all this while supposed a body also) consists of atoms too, that are of a much coarser alloy, methinks a mixture should not be necessary, but a hinderance, and great debasement, rather, to this rational composition. Besides, that it cannot be understood, if it were necessary these atoms should receive any tincture from the body, in order to their being rational, what they can receive, or how they can receive any thing. They have not pores that can admit an adventitious moisture, though it were of the divinest nectar, and the body could ever so plentifully furnish them with it. Wherein then lies the great advantage these atoms have by being in the body, to their commencing rational? If there be such advantage, why can it not be understood? Why is it not assigned? Why should we further spend our guesses what may possibly be said? But yet, may not much be attributed to the convenient and well fenced cavity of the brain's receptacle, or the more secret chambers within that, where the studious atoms may be very private and free from disturbance? Yet sure it is hard to say, why they that are wont to do it *here*, might not as well philosophize in some well-chosen cavern, or hole of a rock; nor were it impossible to provide them *there*, with as soft a bed. And yet would it not be some relief to speak of the fine slender pipes, winding to and fro, wherein they may be conveyed so conveniently from place to place, that if they do not fall into a reasoning humour in one place, they may in another? Why, what can this do? It seems somewhat like Balaam's project, to get into a vein of incantation, by changing stations. And transplace them as you will, it

requires more magic than ever he was master of, to make those innocent, harmless things, masters of reason.

For do but consider, what if you had a large phial capable of as great a quantity as you can think needful, of very fine particles, and, replenished with them, closely stopped, and well luted; suppose these as pure and fit for the purpose as you can imagine, only not yet rational; will their faring to and fro, through very close and stanch tubes, from one such receptacle to another, make them at last become so? It seems then, do what you will with them, toss and tumble them hither and thither, rack them from vessel to vessel, try what methods you can devise of sublimation or improvement, every thing looks like a vain and hopeless essay. For indeed, do what you please or can think of, they are such immutable entities, you can never make them less, or finer, than they originally were: and rational they were not, before their meeting in the body; wherefore it were a strange wonder, if that should so far alter the case with them, that they should become rational by it.

And now, I must, upon the whole, profess not to be well pleased with the strain of this discourse; not that I think it unsuitable to its subject, (for I see not how it is fitly to be dealt with in a more serious way,) but that I dislike the subject. And were it not that it is too obvious, how prone the minds of some are to run themselves into any the grossest absurdities rather than admit the plain and easy sentiments of religion; it were miserable trifling to talk at this rate, and a loss of time not to be endured. But when an unaccountable aversion to the acknowledgment and adoration of the ever-blessed Deity, hurries away men, affrighted and offended at the lustre of his so manifest appearances, to take a bad, but the only shelter the case can admit, under the wings of any the most silly, foolish figment; though the ill temper and dangerous state of the persons is to be thought on with much pity, yet the things which they pretend being in themselves ridiculous, if we will entertain them into our thoughts at all, cannot fitly be entertained but with derision. Nor doth it more unbecome a serious person to laugh at what is ridiculous, than gravely to weigh and ponder what is weighty and considerable; provided he does not seek occasions of that former sort, on purpose to gratify a vain humour; but only allow himself to discourse suitably to them, when they occur. And their dotage who would fain serve themselves of so wildly extravagant and impossible suppositions, for the fostering their horrid misbelief,

that they have no God to worship, would certainly justify as sharp ironies, as the prophet Elijah bestows upon them who worshipped Baal, instead of the true God.

(3.) Nor is any thing here said intended as a reflection on such, as being unfurnished with a notion of created, intelligent spirits, that might distinguish their substance from the most subtile matter, have therefore thought that their mind or thinking power might have some such *substratum*, unto which it is super-added, or impressed thereon by a divine hand; in the mean time not doubting their immortality, much less the existence of a Deity, the Author and Former of them, and all things. For they are no way guilty of that blasphemous nonsense, to make them consist of necessary, self-subsistent matter, every minute particle whereof is judged eternal and immutable, and in themselves, for aught we can find asserted, destitute of reason: and which yet acquire it by no one knows what coalition, without the help of a wise efficient, that shall direct and order it to so unimaginable an improvement. These persons do only think more refined matter capable of that impression and stamp; or of having such a power put into it, by the Creator's all-disposing hand. Wherein, to do them right, though they should impose somewhat hardly upon themselves, if they will make this estimate of the natural capacity of matter; or if they think the acts and power of reason in man, altogether unnatural to him; yet they do, in effect, the more befriend the cause we are pleading for; (as much as it can be befriended by a mis-apprehension: which yet is a thing of that untoward genius, and doth so ill consort with truth, that it is never admitted as a friend, in any one respect; but it repays it with a mischievous revenge, in some other, as might many ways be shewn in this instance, if it were within the compass of our present design;) it being evident, that if any portion of matter shall indeed be certainly found the actual subject of such powers, and to have such operations belonging to it, there is the plainer and more undeniable necessity and demonstration of his power and wisdom, who can make any thing, of any thing; of stones raise up children to Abraham! and who shall then have done that which is so altogether impossible, except to him to whom all things are possible. There is the more manifest need of his hand to heighten dull matter, to a qualifiedness for performances, so much above its nature; to make the loose and independent parts of so fluid matter, cohere, and hold together; that, if it were once made capable of knowledge, and the actual subject of it; whatso-

ever notions were impressed thereon, might not be, in a moment, confounded and lost: as indeed they could not but be, if the particles of matter were the immediate seat of reason; and so steady a hand did not hold them, in a settled composure, that they be not disordered, and men have, thence, the necessity of beginning afresh, to know any thing, every hour of the day. Though yet it seems a great deal more reasonable to suppose the souls of men to be of a substance in itself more consistent, and more agreeable to our experience: who find a continual ebbing and flowing of spirits, without being sensible of any so notable and sudden changes in our knowledge, as we could not but, thereupon, observe in ourselves: if they, or any as fluid finer matter, were the immediate subjects of it. It is therefore however sufficiently evident, and out of question, that the human soul (be its own substance what it will) must have an efficient diverse from matter; which it was our present intendment to evince.

2. Our way is clear to proceed to the second inquiry, whether it be not also manifest, from the powers and operations which belong to it as it is reasonable, that it must have had an intelligent efficient? That is, since we find, and are assured, that there is a sort of being in the world (yea somewhat of ourselves, and that hath best right, of any thing else about us, to be called ourselves) that can think, understand, deliberate, argue, &c. and which we can most certainly assure ourselves (whether it were pre-existent in any former state, or no) is not an independent or uncaused being: and hath therefore been the effect of some cause, whether it be not apparently the effect of a wise cause?

And this, upon supposition of what hath been before proved, seems not liable to any the least rational doubt. For it is already apparent, that it is not itself matter; and if it were, it is however the more apparent, that its cause is not matter; inasmuch, as if it be itself matter, its powers and operations are so much above the natural capacity of matter, as that it must have had a cause, so much more noble and of a more perfect nature than that, as to be able to raise and improve it, beyond the natural capacity of matter: which it was impossible for that, itself, to do. Whence it is plain, it must have a cause diverse from matter.

Wherefore this its immaterial cause must either be wise and intelligent, or not so. But is it possible any man should ever be guilty of a greater absurdity than to acknowledge some certain immaterial agent, destitute of wisdom, the only cause

and fountain of all that wisdom, that *is*, or hath ever been, in the whole race of mankind. That is as much as to say, that all the wisdom of mankind hath been caused without a cause. For it is the same thing, after we have acknowledged any thing to be caused, to say it was caused by no cause, as to say it was caused by such a cause, as hath nothing of that in it, whereof we find somewhat to be in the effect. Nor can it avail any thing, to speak of the disproportion or superior excellency in some effects to their second, or to their only partial causes. As that there are sometimes learned children of unlearned parents. For who did ever in that case say the parents were the productive causes of that learning? Or of them, as they were learned? Sure that learning comes from some other cause. But shall it then be said, the souls of men have received their being from some such immaterial agent destitute of wisdom; and afterward, their wisdom and intellectual ability came some other way; by their own observation, or by institution and precept, from others? Whence then came their capacity of observing, or of receiving such instruction? Can any thing naturally destitute even of seminal reason, (as we may call it,) or of any aptitude or capacity tending thereto, ever be able to make observations, or receive instructions, whereby at length it may become rational? And is not that capacity of the soul of man a real something? Or is there no difference between being capable of reason and incapable? What, then, did this real something proceed from nothing? Or was the soul itself caused, and this its capacity, uncaused? Or was its cause, only, capable of intellectual perfection, but not actually furnished therewith? But if it were only capable, surely its advantages for the actual attainment thereof have been much greater than ours. Whence it were strange if that capacity should never have come into act. And more strange, that we should know, or have any ground to pretend, that it hath not. But that there was an actual exercise of wisdom in the production of the reasonable soul is most evident. For is it a necessary being? That we have proved it is not. It is therefore a contingent, and its being depended on a free cause, into whose pleasure, only, it was resolvable, that it should be, or not be; and which therefore had a dominion over its own acts. If this bespeak not an intelligent agent, what doth?

And though this might also be said concerning every thing else which is not necessarily, and so might yield a more general argument to evince a free designing cause; yet it concludes with greater evidence concerning the reasonable soul,

whose powers and operations it is so manifestly impossible should have proceeded from matter. And therefore even that vain and refuted pretence itself, that other things might, by the necessary laws of its motion, become what they are, can have less place here. Whence it is more apparent that the reasonable soul must have had a free and intelligent cause, that used liberty and counsel, in determining that it should be, and especially that it should be such a sort of thing as we find it is. For when we see how aptly its powers and faculties serve for their proper and peculiar operations, who that is not besides himself can think that such a thing was made by one that knew not what he was doing? Or that such powers were not given on purpose for such operations? And what is the capacity, but a power that should sometime be reduced into act, and arrive to the exercise of reason itself?

Now was it possible any thing should give that power that had it not any way? That is, in the same kind, or in some more excellent and noble kind? For we contend not that this Agent whereof we speak is in the strict and proper sense rational, taking that term to import an ability or faculty of inferring what is less known from what is more. For we suppose all things equally known to him, (which, so far as is requisite to our present design, that is, the representing him the proper object of religion, or of that honour which the dedication of a *temple* to him imports, we may in due time come more expressly to assert,) and that the knowledge which is with us the *end* of reasoning, is *in him* in its highest perfection, without being at all beholden to that *means;* that all the connexion of things with one another lie open to one comprehensive view, and are known to be connected, but not because they are so. We say, is it conceivable that man's knowing power should proceed from a cause that hath it not, in the same, or this more perfect kind? And may use those words to this purpose, not for their authority, (which we expect not should be here significant,) but for the convincing evidence they carry with them, "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" That we may drive this matter to an issue, it is evident the soul of man is not a necessary, self-originate thing; and had therefore some cause. We find it to have knowledge, or the power of knowing, belonging to it. Therefore we say, So had its cause. We rely not here upon the credit of vulgar maxims, (whereof divers might be mentioned,) but the reason of them, or of the thing itself we

allege. And do now speak of the whole, entire cause of this being, the human soul, or of whatsoever is causal of it; or of any perfection naturally appertaining to it. It is of an intelligent nature. Did this intelligent nature proceed from an unintelligent, as the whole and only cause of it? That were to speak against our own eyes, and most natural, common sentiments; and were the same thing as to say that something came of nothing. For it is all one to say so, and to say that any thing communicated what it had not to communicate. Or (which is alike madly absurd,) to say that the same thing was such, and not such, intelligent, and not intelligent, able to communicate an intelligent nature, (for sure what it doth it is able to do,) and not able, (for it is not able to communicate what it hath not,) at the same time.

It is hardly here worth the while to spend time in countermining that contemptible refuge, (which is as incapable of offending us, as of being defended,) that human souls may perhaps only have proceeded in the ordinary course of generation from one another. For that none have ever said any thing to that purpose deserving a confutation, except that some sober and pious persons, for the avoiding of some other difficulties, have thought it more safe to assert the traduction of human souls, who yet were far enough from imagining that they could be total, or first causes to one another: and doubted not, but they had the constant necessary assistance of that same Being we are pleading for, acting in his own sphere, as the first cause in *all such*, as well as *any other* productions. Wherein they nothing oppose the main design of this discourse; and therefore it is not in our way to offer at any opposition unto them.

But if any have a mind to indulge themselves the liberty of so much dotage as to say the souls of men were first and only causes to one another; either they must suppose them to be *material* beings; and then we refer them to what hath been already said, shewing that their powers and operations cannot belong to matter, nor arise from it; or *immaterial*, and then they cannot produce one another in the way of generation. For of what pre-existent substance are they made? Theirs who beget them? Of that they can part with nothing, separability, at least, of parts being a most confessed property of matter. Or some other? Where will they find that other spiritual substance, that belonged not inseparably to some individual being before? And besides, if it were pre-

existent, as it must be if a soul be generated out of it, then they were not the first and only causes of this production. And in another way than that of generation, how will any form the notion of making a soul? Let experience and the making of trial convince the speculators. By what power, or by what art, will they make a reasonable soul spring up out of nothing?

It might be hoped that thus, without disputing the possibility of an eternal, successive production of souls, this shift may appear vain. But if any will persist, and say, that how or in what way soever they are produced, it is strange if they need any nobler cause than themselves; for may not any living thing well enough be thought capable of producing another of the same kind, of no more than equal perfection with itself? To this we say, besides that no one living thing is the only cause of another such; yet if that were admitted possible, what will it avail? For hath every soul that hath ever existed, or been in being, been produced, in this way, by another? This it were ridiculous to say; for if every one were so produced, there was then *some one*, before *every one;* inasmuch as that which produces, must surely have been before that which is produced by it. But how can *every one* have *one* before it? A manifest contradiction in the very terms! For then there will be one without the compass of every one. And how is it then said to be every one? There is then it seems one, besides, or more than all. And so all is not all. And if this be thought a sophism, let the matter be soberly considered thus. The soul of man is either a thing of that nature universally (and consequently every individual soul) as that it doth exist of itself, necessarily and independently, or not. If it be, then we have, however, a wise intelligent being necessarily existing. The thing we have been proving all this while. Yet this concession we will not accept, for though it is most certain there is such a being, we have also proved the human soul is not it. Whence it is evidently a dependent being, in its own nature, that could never have been of itself, and consequently not at all, had it not been put into being by somewhat else. And being so in its own nature, it must be thus with every one that partakes of this nature. And consequently it must be somewhat of another nature that did put the souls of men into being. Otherwise, the whole stock and lineage of human souls is said to have been dependent on a productive cause, and yet had nothing whereon to depend; and so is both caused by another, and not caused. And therefore since it is hereby evident it was

somewhat else, and of another nature, than a human soul, by which all human souls were produced into being: we again say, that distinct being either was a dependent, caused being, or not. If not, it being proved that the soul of man cannot but have had an intelligent, or wise cause, we have now what we seek—an independent, necessary, intelligent being, if it do depend, or any will be so idle to say so; that, however, will infallibly and very speedily lead us to the same mark. For though some have been pleased to dream of an infinite succession of individuals of this or that kind, I suppose we have no dream as yet, ready formed, to come under confutation, of infinite kinds or orders of beings, gradually superior, one above another; the inferior still depending on the superior, and all upon nothing. And therefore, I conceive, we may fairly take leave of this argument from the human soul, as having gained from it sufficient evidence of the existence of a necessary being, that is intelligent, and designingly active, or guided by wisdom and counsel, in what it doth.

We might also, if it were needful, further argue the same thing from a power or ability manifestly superior to, and that exceeds the utmost perfection of human nature, namely, that of prophecy, or the prediction of future contingencies; yea, and from another that exceeds the whole sphere of all created nature, and which crosses and countermands the known and stated laws thereof, namely, that of working miracles; both of them exercised with manifest design; as might evidently be made appear, by manifold instances, to as many as can believe any thing to be true, more than what they have seen with their own eyes. And that do not take present sense, yea and their own only, to be the alone measure of all reality. But it is not necessary we insist upon every thing that may be said, so that enough be said to serve our present purpose.

VIII. The subject of the preceding chapter continued; and that our purpose may yet be more fully served, and such a being evidenced to exist as we may with satisfaction esteem to merit a *temple* with us, and the *religion* of it, it is necessary, *Ninthly*, that we add somewhat concerning the *divine goodness*; for unto that eternal Being, whose existence we have hitherto asserted, goodness also cannot but appertain; together with those his other attributes we have spoken of.

It is not needful here to be curious about the usual scholastical notions of goodness, or what it imports, as it is wont to be attributed to being in the general, what, as it belongs in a pe-

culiar sense to intellectual beings, or what more special import it may have, in reference to *this*. That which we at present chiefly intend by it, is a propension to do good with delight; or most freely, without other inducement than the agreeableness of it to his nature who doth it; and a certain delectation and complacency, which, hence, is taken in so doing. The name of goodness (though thus it more peculiarly signifies the particular virtue of liberality) is of a significancy large enough, even in the moral acceptation, to comprehend all other perfections or virtues, that belong to, or may any way commend, the will of a free agent. These therefore we exclude not; and particularly whatsoever is wont to be signified, as attributable unto God, by the names of *holiness*, as a steady inclination unto what is intellectually pure and comely, with an aversion to the contrary; *justice*, as that signifies an inclination to deal equally, which is included in the former, yet as more expressly denoting what is most proper to a governor over others, namely, a resolution not to let the transgression of laws, made for the preservation of common order, pass without due animadversion and punishment; *truth*, whose signification also may be wholly contained under those former more general terms, but more directly contains sincerity, unaptness to deceive, and constancy to one's word: for these may properly be styled good things in a moral sense; as many other things might, in another notion of goodness, which it belongs not to our present design to make mention of. But these are mentioned as more directly tending to represent to us an amiable object of religion. And are referred hither, as they fitly enough may, out of an unwillingness to multiply, without necessity, particular heads or subjects of discourse.

In the mean time, as was said, what we principally intend, is, That the Being whose existence we have been endeavouring to evince, is *good*, as that imports a ready inclination of will to communicate unto others what may be good to them; creating, first, its own object, and then issuing forth to it, in acts of free beneficence, suitable to the nature of every thing created by it. Which, though it be the primary or first thing carried in the notion of this goodness, yet because that inclination is not otherwise good than as it consists with holiness, justice, and truth, these therefore may be esteemed secondarily, at least, to belong to it, as inseparable qualifications thereof.

Wherefore it is not a merely natural and necessary emanation we here intend, that prevents any act or exercise of coun-

sel or design; which would no way consist with the liberty of the Divine will, and would make the Deity as well a necessary Agent, as a necessary Being; yea, and would therefore make all the creatures merely natural and necessary emanations, and so destroy the distinction of necessary and contingent beings: and, by consequence, bid fair to the making all things God. It would infer not only the eternity of the world, but would seem to infer either the absolute infinity of it, or the perfection of it, and of every creature in it, to that degree, as that nothing could be more perfect in its own kind, than it is; or would infer the finiteness of the Divine Being. For it would make what he *hath done* the adequate measure of what he *can do*, and would make all his administrations necessary, yea, and all the actions of men, and consequently take away all law and government out of the world, and all measures of right and wrong, and make all punitive justice, barbarous cruelty: and consequently, give us a notion of goodness, at length, plainly inconsistent with itself.

All this is provided against, by our having first asserted the *wisdom* of that Being, whereunto we also attribute *goodness*; which guides all the issues of it, according to those measures or rules which the essential rectitude of the divine will gives, or rather is, unto it: whereby also a foundation is laid of answering such cavils against the *divine goodness*, as they are apt to raise to themselves, who are wont to magnify this attribute to the suppression of others; which is, indeed, in the end, to magnify it to nothing. And such goodness needs no other demonstration, than the visible instances and effects we have of it in the creation and conservation of this world; and particularly, in his large, munificent bounty and kindness towards man, whereof his designing him for his temple and residence, will be a full and manifest proof.

And of all this, his own self-sufficient fulness leaves it impossible to us to imagine another reason, than the delight he takes in dispensing his own free and large communications. Besides, that when we see some semblances and imitations of this goodness in the natures of some men, which we are sure are not nothing, they must needs proceed from something, and have some fountain and original, which can be no other than the common Cause and Author of all things. In whom therefore, this goodness doth firstly and most perfectly reside.

CHAP. IV.

I. Generally all supposable perfection asserted of this Being, where, *First*, A being absolutely perfect is endeavoured to be evinced from the (already proved) necessary being, which is shewn to import, in the general, the utmost fulness of being. Also divers things in particular that tend to evince that general. 1. As that it is at the remotest distance from no being. 2. Most purely actual. 3. Most abstracted being. 4. The productive and conserving cause of all things else. 5. Undiminishable. 6. Incapable of addition. *Secondly*, Hence is more expressly deduced, 1. The infiniteness of this being. II. An inquiry whether it be possible the creature can be actually infinite? III. Difficulties concerning the absolute fulness and infiniteness of God considered. 2. The onliness of this Being. The Trinity not thereby excluded.

I. SOME account hath been thus far given of that *Being*, whereunto we have been designing to assert the honour of a *temple*. Each of the particulars having been severally insisted on, that concur to make up that notion of this being, which was at first laid down. And more largely, what hath been more opposed, by persons of an atheistical or irreligious temper. But because, in that fore-mentioned account of God, there was added to the particulars there enumerated (out of a just consciousness of human inability to comprehend every thing that may possibly belong to him) this general supplement, "That all other supposable excellencies whatsoever, do in the highest perfection appertain also originally unto this Being," it is requisite that somewhat be said concerning this addition. Especially in as much as it comprehends in it, or may infer, some things (not yet expressly mentioned) which may be thought necessary to the evincing the reasonableness of religion, or our self-dedication as a temple to him.

For instance, it may possibly be alleged, that if it were admitted there is somewhat that is eternal, uncaused, independent, necessarily existent, that is self-active, living, powerful, wise, and good; yet all this will not infer upon us a universal obligation to religion, unless it can also be evinced, That this Being is every way sufficient to supply and satisfy all our real wants and just desires. And, That this Being is but *one*, and

so that all be at a certainty where their religion ought to terminate; and that the worship of *every* temple must concentre and meet in the *same* object. Now the eviction of an absolutely perfect Being would include each of these; and answer both the purposes which may seem hitherto not so fully satisfied. It is therefore requisite that we endeavour,

First, To shew that the Being hitherto described is absolutely or every way perfect; and,

Secondly, To deduce, from the same grounds, the absolute *infinity*, and the *unity* or the onliness thereof.

And for the *first* part of this undertaking, it must be acknowledged absolute or universal perfection cannot be pretended to have been expressed in any, or in all the works of God together. Neither in *number*, for aught we know, (for as we cannot conceive, nor consequently speak, of divine perfections, but under the notion of many, whatsoever their real identity may be, so we do not know, but that within the compass of universal perfection there may be some particular ones, of which there is no footstep in the creation, and whereof we have never formed any thought,) nor (more certainly) in *degree*; for surely the world, and the particular creatures in it, are not so perfect in correspondence to those attributes of its great Architect, which we have mentioned, namely, his power, wisdom, and goodness, as he might have made them, if he had pleased. And indeed, to say the world were absolutely and universally perfect, were to make *that* God.

Wherefore it must also be acknowledged that an absolutely perfect Being cannot be immediately demonstrated from its effects, as whereto they neither do, nor is it within the capacity of created nature that they can, adequately correspond. Whence therefore, all that can be done for the evincing of the absolute and universal perfection of God, must be in some other way or method of discourse.

And though it be acknowledged that it cannot be immediately evidenced from the creation, yet it is to be hoped that mediately it may. For from thence (as we have seen) a necessary self-originate being, such as hath been described, is, with the greatest certainty, to be concluded; and, from thence, if we attentively consider, we shall be led to an absolutely perfect one. That is, since we have the same certainty of such a necessary self-originate being, as we have that there is any thing existent at all. If we seriously weigh what kind of being this must needs be, or what its notion must import, above what hath been already evinced; we shall not be found, in

this way, much to fall short of our present aim, though we have also other evidence that may be produced in its own fitter place.

Here therefore let us a while make a stand, and more distinctly consider how far we are already advanced, that we may with the better order and advantage make our further progress.

These two things then are already evident. That there is a necessary being that hath been eternally of itself, without dependence upon any thing, either as a productive or conserving cause; and, of itself, full of activity and vital energy, so as to be a productive and sustaining cause, to other things. Of this any the most confused and indistinct view of this world, or a mere taking notice that there is any thing in being that lives and moves, and withal that alters and changes, (which it is impossible the necessary being itself should do,) cannot but put us out of doubt. And, that this necessary self-originate, vital, active being hath very vast power, admirable wisdom, and most free and large goodness belonging to it. And of this, our nearer and more deliberate view and contemplation of the word do equally ascertain us. For of these things we find the manifest prints and footsteps in it. Yea, we find the derived things themselves, power, wisdom, goodness, in the creatures: and we are most assured they have not sprung from nothing; nor from any thing that had them not. And that which originally had them, or was their first fountain, must have them necessarily and essentially, (together with whatsoever else belongs to its being,) in and of itself. So that the asserting of any other necessary being, that is in itself destitute of these things, signifies no more towards the giving any account how these things came to be in the world, than if no being, necessarily existing, were asserted at all. We are therefore, by the exigency of the case itself, constrained to acknowledge, not only that there is a necessary being, but that there is such a one as could be, and was, the fountain and cause of all those several kinds and degrees of being and perfection that we take notice of in the world besides. Another sort of necessary being should not only be asserted to no purpose, there being nothing to be gained by it, no imaginable use to be made of it, as a principle that can serve any valuable end; (for suppose such a thing as necessary matter, it will, as hath been shewn, be unalterable; and therefore another sort of matter must be supposed besides it, that may be the matter of the universe, raised up out of nothing for that purpose, unto

which this so unwieldy and unmanageable an entity, can never serve;) but also it will be impossible to be proved. No man can be able with any plausible shew of reason to make it out. Yea, and much may be said, I conceive with convincing evidence, against it. As may perhaps be seen in the sequel of this discourse.

In the mean time, that there is, however, a necessary being, unto which all the perfections whereof we have any footsteps or resemblances in the creation do originally and essentially belong, is undeniably evident.

Now, that we may proceed, what can self-essentiate, underived power, wisdom, goodness, be, but most perfect power, wisdom, goodness? Or such, as than which there can never be more perfect? For since there can be no wisdom, power, or goodness, which is not either original and self-essentiate, or derived and participated from thence; who sees not that the former must be the more perfect? Yea, and that it comprehended all the other (as what was from it) in itself, and consequently that it is simply the most perfect? And the reason will be the same, concerning any other perfection, the stamps and characters whereof we find signed upon the creatures.

But that the being unto which these belong is absolutely and universally perfect in every kind, must be further evidenced by considering more at large the notion and import of such a self-originate necessary being.

Some indeed, both more anciently,* and of late, have inverted this course; and from the supposition of absolute perfection, have gone about to infer necessity of existence, as being contained in the idea of the former. But of this latter we are otherwise assured upon clearer and less exceptionable terms. And being so, are to consider what improvement may be made of it to our present purpose.

And in the general, this seems manifestly imported in the notion of the necessary being we have already evinced, that it have in it (some way or other, in what way there will be occasion to consider hereafter) the entire sum and utmost fulness of being, beyond which or without the compass whereof no

* So that whatever there is of strength in that way of arguing, the glory of it cannot be without injury appropriated to the present age, much less to any particular person therein: it having, since Anselm, been ventilated by divers others heretofore. D. Scot. dist. 2. Q. 2. Th. Aquin. P. 1. Q. 2. art. 1. contra Gentil. l. 1. c. 10. Bradwardin, l. 1. c. 1. And by divers of late, as is sufficiently known, some rejecting, others much confiding in it, both of these former, and of modern writers.

perfection is conceivable, or indeed (which is of the same import) nothing.

Let it be observed, that we pretend not to argue this from the bare terms *necessary being* only, but from hence, that it is such as we have found it; though indeed these very terms import not a little to this purpose. For that which is necessarily of itself, without being beholden to any thing, seems as good as all things, and to contain in itself an immense fulness, being indigent of nothing. Nor by indigence is here meant cravingness, or a sense of want only; in opposition whereto, every good and virtuous man hath or may attain a sort of αὐτάρκεια, or self-fulness, and be satisfied from himself: (which yet is a stamp of divinity, and a part of the image of God, or such a participation of the divine nature, as is agreeable to the state and condition of a creature:) but we understand by it (what is naturally before that) want itself really, and not in opinion, as the covetous is said to be poor. On the other hand, we here intend not a merely rational, (much less an imaginary,) but a real self-fulness. And so we say, what is of that nature, that it is, and subsists wholly and only of itself, without depending on any other, must owe this absoluteness to so peculiar an excellency of its own nature, as we cannot well conceive to be less than whereby it comprehends in itself the most boundless and unlimited fulness of being, life, power, or whatsoever can be conceived under the name of a perfection. For taking notice of the existence of any thing whatsoever, some reason must be assignable, whence it is that this particular being doth exist, and hath such and such powers and properties belonging to it, as do occur to our notice therein. When we can now resolve its existence into some cause that put it into being, and made it what it is, we cease so much to admire the thing, how excellent soever it be, and turn our admiration upon its cause, concluding it to have all the perfection in it which we discern in the effect, whatsoever unknown perfection (which we may suppose is very great) it may have besides. And upon this ground we are led, when we behold the manifold excellencies that lie dispersed among particular beings in this universe, with the glory of the whole resulting thence, to resolve their existence into a common cause, which we design by the name of *God*. And now considering him as a wise Agent, (which hath been proved,) and consequently a free one, that acted not from any necessity of nature, but his mere good pleasure herein, we will not only conclude him to have all that perfection and excellency in him which

we find him to have displayed in so vast and glorious a work, but will readily believe him (supposing we have admitted a conviction concerning what hath been discoursed before) to have a most inconceivable treasure of hidden excellency and perfection in him, that is not represented to our view in this work of his: and account, that he who could do all this which we see is done, could do unspeakably more. For though, speaking of natural and necessitated agents, which always act to their uttermost, it would be absurd to argue from their having done some lesser thing, to their power of doing somewhat that is much greater; yet as to free agents, that can choose their own act, and guide themselves by wisdom and judgment therein, the matter is not so. As when some great prince bestows a rich largess upon some mean person, especially that deserved nothing from him, or was recommended by nothing to his royal favour, besides his poverty and misery; we justly take it for a very significant demonstration of that princely munificence and bounty, which would incline him to do much greater things, when he should see a proportionable cause.

But now, if taking notice of the excellencies that appear in caused beings, and inquiring how they come to exist and be what they are, we resolve all into their cause; which, considering as perfectly free and arbitrary in all his communications, we do thence rationally conclude, that if he had thought fit, he could have made a much more pompous display of himself; and that there is in him, besides what appears, a vast and most abundant store of undiscovered perfection.

When next we turn our inquiry and contemplation more entirely upon the cause, and bethink ourselves, But how came he to exist and be what he is? Finding this cannot be refunded upon any superior cause; and our utmost inquiry can admit of no other result but this, that he is of himself what he is, we will surely say then, He is all in all. And that perfection which before we judged vastly great, we will now conclude altogether absolute, and such beyond which no greater can be thought.

Adding, I say, to what pre-conceptions we had of his greatness, from the works which we see have been done by him, (for why should we lose any ground we might esteem ourselves to have gained before?) the consideration of his necessary self-subsistence: and that no other reason is assignable of his being what he is, but the peculiar and incommunicable excellency of his own nature; whereby he was not only able to make such a world, but did possess eternally and invariably in himself

all that he is, and hath : we cannot conceive that *all* to be less than absolutely universal, and comprehensive of whatsoever can lie within the whole compass of being.

For when we find that among all other beings, (which is most certainly true not only of actual, but all possible beings also,) how perfect soever they are or may be in their own kinds, none of them, nor all of them together, are or ever can be of that perfection, as to be of themselves without dependence on somewhat else as their productive, yea and sustaining cause ; we see besides, that their cause hath all the perfection, some way, in it that is to be found in them all : there is also that appropriate perfection belonging thereto, that it could be ; and eternally is (yea and could not but be) only of itself, by the underived and incommunicable excellency of its own being. And surely, what includes in it all the perfection of all actual and possible beings, besides its own, (for there is nothing possible which some cause, yea and even this, cannot produce,) and inconceivably more, must needs be absolutely and every way perfect. Of all which perfections this is the radical one, that belongs to this common Cause and Author of all things, that he is necessarily and only self-subsisting. For if this high prerogative in point of being had been wanting, nothing at all had ever been. Therefore we attribute to God the greatest thing that can be said or thought, (and not what is wholly diverse from all other perfection, but which contains all others in it,) when we affirm of him that he is necessarily of himself. For though when we have bewildered and lost ourselves (as we soon may) in the contemplation of this amazing subject, we readily indulge our wearied minds the ease and liberty of resolving this high excellency of self or necessary existence into a mere negation, and say that we mean by it nothing else than that he was not from another ; yet surely, if we would take some pains with ourselves, and keep our slothful shifting thoughts to some exercise in this matter, though we can never comprehend that vast fulness of perfection which is imported in it, (for it were not what we plead for, if we could comprehend it,) yet we should soon see and confess that it contains unspeakably more than a negation, even some great thing that is so much beyond our thoughts, that we shall reckon we have said but a little in saying we cannot conceive it. And that, when we have stretched our understandings to the utmost of their line and measure, though we may suppose ourselves to have conceived a great deal, there is infinitely more that we conceive not.

Wherefore that is a sober and most important truth which is occasionally drawn forth (as is supposed) from the so admired Des Cartes, by the urgent objections of his very acute, friendly adversary,* that the inexhaustible power of God is the reason for which he needed no cause; and that since that unexhausted power, or the immensity of his essence, is most highly positive, therefore he may be said to be of himself positively, that is, not as if he did ever by any positive efficiency cause himself (which is most manifestly impossible) but that the positive excellency of his own being was such, as could never need, nor admit of, being caused.

And that seems highly rational, (which is so largely insisted on by Doctor Jackson, and divers others,†) that what is without cause must also be without limit of being; because all limitation proceeds from the cause of a thing, which imparted to it so much and no more; which argument, though it seems neglected by Des Cartes, and is opposed by his antagonist; yet I cannot but judge the longer one meditates, the less he shall understand, how any thing can be limited *ad intra*, or from itself, &c. As the author of the *Tentam. Phys. Theol.* speaks.

But that we may entertain ourselves with some more particular considerations of this necessary being, which may evince that general assertion of its absolute plenitude or fulness of essence:

1. It appears to be such as is at the greatest imaginable distance from non-entity. For what can be at a greater, than that which is necessarily, which signifies as much as whereto not to be is utterly impossible? Now an utter impossibility not to be, or the uttermost distance from *no* being, seems plainly to imply the absolute plenitude of *all* being. And, if here it be said that to be necessarily and of itself needs be understood to import no more than a firm possession of that being which a thing hath, be it ever so scant or minute a portion of being; I answer, it seems indeed so, if we measure the signification of this expression by its first and more obvious appearance. But if you consider the matter more narrowly, you will find here is also signified the nature and kind of the being possessed, as well as the manner of possession, namely, that it is a being of so excellent and noble a kind, as that it can subsist alone without being beholden: which is so great an excellency, as that it manifestly comprehends all other, or is the

* Ad ob. in Med. resp. quartæ.
† Of the Essence and Attributes of God.

foundation of all that can be conceived besides. Which, they that fondly dream of necessary matter, not considering, unwarily make one single atom a more excellent thing than the whole frame of heaven and earth: *that* being supposed simply necessary, *this* the merest piece of hap-hazard, the strangest chance imaginable, and beyond what any but themselves could ever have imagined. And which, being considered, would give us to understand that no minute or finite being can be necessarily.

And hence we may see what it is to be nearer, or at a further distance from not-being.

For these things that came contingently into being, or at the pleasure of a free cause, have all but a finite and limited being, whereof some, having a smaller portion of being than others, approach so much the nearer to not-being. Proportionably, what hath its being necessarily and of itself, is at the farthest distance from no-being, as comprehending all being in itself. Or, to borrow the expressions of an elegant writer, translated into our own language,* "We have much more nonessense than essense; if we have the essence of a man, yet not of the heavens, or of angels." "We are confined and limited within a particular essence, but God, who is what he is, comprehendeth all possible essences."

Nor is this precariously spoken, or as what may be hoped to be granted upon courtesy. But let the matter be rigidly examined and discussed, and the certain truth of it will most evidently appear. For if any thing be, in this sense, remoter than other from no-being, it must either be, what is necessarily of itself, or what is contingently at the pleasure of the other. But since nothing is, besides that self-originate necessary being, but what was from it; and nothing from it but what was within its productive power; it is plain all that, with its own being, was contained in it. And therefore, even in that sense, it is at the greatest distance from no-being; as comprehending the utmost fulness of being in itself, and consequently absolute perfection. Which will yet further appear, in what follows.

2. We therefore add, that necessary being is most unmixed or purest being, without allay. That is pure which is full of itself. Purity is not here meant in a corporeal sense, nor in the moral; but as, with metaphysicians, it signifies simplicity of essence. And in its present use is more especially intended to

* Causin.

signify that simplicity which is opposed to the composition of act and possibility. We say then, that necessary being imports purest actuality; which is the ultimate and highest perfection of being. For it signifies no remaining possibility, yet unreplete or not filled up, and consequently the fullest exuberancy and entire confluence of all being, as in its fountain and original source. We need not here look further to evince this, than the native import of the very terms themselves; *necessity* and *possibility*; the latter whereof is not so fitly said to be excluded the former, as contingency is, but to be swallowed up of it; as fulness takes up all the space which were otherwise nothing but vacuity or emptiness. It is plain then that necessary being engrosses all possible being, both that is, and (for the same reason) that ever was so. For nothing can be, or ever was, in possibility to come into being, but what either must spring, or hath sprung, from the necessary self-subsisting being.

So that unto all that vast possibility, a proportionable actuality of this being must be understood to correspond. Else the other were not possible. For nothing is possible to be produced which is not within the actual productive power of the necessary being: I say within *its* actual productive power; for if its power for such production were not already actual, it could never become so, and so were none at all: inasmuch as necessary being can never alter, and consequently can never come actually to be what it already is not; upon which account it is truly said, *In æternis posse & esse sunt idem.—In eternal things, to be capable of being and to be are the same thing.* Wherefore in it, is nothing else but pure actuality, as profound and vast as is the utmost possibility of all created or producible being; that is, it can be nothing other than it is, but can do all things, of which more hereafter. It therefore stands opposed, not only, more directly, to impossibility of being, which is the most proper notion of no-being, but some way, even to possibility also. That is, the possibility of being any thing but what it is; as being every way complete and perfectly full already.

3. Again, we might further add, that it is the most abstracted being, or is being in the very abstract. A thing much insisted on by some of the schoolmen. And the notion which with much obscurity they pursue after their manner, may carry some such sense as this, (if it may, throughout, be called sense,) that whereas no created nature is capable of any other

than mere mental abstraction, but exists always in concretion with some subject, that, be it ever so refined, is grosser and less perfect than itself; so that we can distinguish the mentally abstracted essence, and the thing which hath that essence; by which concretion, essence is limited, and is only the particular essence of this or that thing, which hath or possesses that essence. The necessary being is, in strict propriety, not so truly said to have essence, as to be it, and exist separately by itself; not as limited to this or that thing. Whence it is, in itself, universal essence, containing therefore, not formally, but eminently, the being of all things in perfect simplicity. Whence all its own attributes are capable of being affirmed of it in the abstract,* that it is wisdom, power, goodness; and not only hath these, and that upon this account it is a being, which is necessarily and of itself. For that which is necessarily and of itself, is not whatsoever it is by the accession of any thing to itself, whereof necessary being is incapable; but by its own simple and unvariable essence. Other being is upon such terms powerful, wise, yea, and existent, as that it may cease to be so. Whereas to necessary being, it is manifestly repugnant, and impossible either simply not to be, or to be any thing else but what and as it is. And though other things may have properties belonging to their essence not separable from it, yet they are not their very essence itself. And, whereas they are in a possibility to lose their very existence, the knot and ligament of whatsoever is most intimate to their actual being, all then falls from them together. Here, essence, properties, and existence, are all one simple thing that can never cease, decay, or change, because the whole being is necessary, Now, all this being supposed, of the force of that form of speech, when we affirm any thing in the abstract of another, we may admit the common sense of men to be the interpreter.

* To which purpose we may take notice of the words of one, not the less worthy to be named, for not being reckoned of that forementioned order. Si enim denominative de eo quippiam prædicaretur abstractum esset tum aliud ab ipso, tum ipso prius. Quod sane impium est, quare neque ens est sed essentia, neque bonus sed bonitas est—If any quality were to be affirmed concerning the Deity, in expressions derived from an abstract term, the idea answering to that abstract term would be both distinct in existence from him and prior to him; which would certainly be impious. It follows therefore that the Deity is not so properly something possessed of an essence, as the essence itself; not so properly a being possessed of goodness, as goodness itself. *Julius Scaliger, Exerc.* 365.

For every body can tell, though they do not know the meaning of the word *abstract*, what we intend when we use that phrase or manner of speaking. As when we say, by way of hyperbolical commendation, Such a man is not only learned, but learning itself; or he not only hath much of virtue, justice, and goodness in him, but he is virtue, justice, and goodness itself, (as was once said of an excellent Pagan *virtuoso*, that I may borrow leave to use that word in the moral sense,) every one knows the phrase intends the appropriating all learning, virtue, justice, goodness, to such a one. Which, because they know unappropriable to any man, they easily understand it to be, in such a case, a rhetorical strain and form of speech. And yet could not know that, if also they did not understand its proper and native import. And so it may as well be understood what is meant by saying of God, He is being itself. With which sense may be reconciled that of (the so named) Dionysius the Areopagite; * that God is not so properly said to be of, or be in, or to have, or partake, of being, as that it is of him, &c. Inasmuch as he is the pre-existent Being to all being; that is, if we understand him to mean all besides his own. In which sense taking being for that which is communicated and imparted, he may truly be said, (as this author and the Platonists generally speak, Proclus in Plat. Theol. l. 2, c. 4.) to be super-essential or super-substantial. But how fitly being is taken in that restrained sense, we may say more hereafter.

In the mean time, what hath been said concerning this abstractedness of the necessary being, hath in it some things so unintelligible, and is accompanied with so great (unmentioned) difficulties, (which it would give us, perhaps, more labour than profit to discuss,) and the absolute perfection of God appears so evidenceable otherwise, by what hath been and may be further said, that we are no way concerned to lay the stress of the cause on this matter only.

4. Moreover, necessary being is the cause and author of all being besides. Whatsoever is not necessary, is caused; for not having being of itself, it must be put into being by some-

* Καὶ αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ εἶναι ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου, καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐστι δὲ τὸ εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς τοῦ εἶναι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστι τὸ εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ εἶναι, καὶ αὐτὸν ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ αὐτὸς ἔχει τὸ εἶναι—His very being is of himself, as previously possessed of being; being is of him, and not he of being; being is in him, and not he in being; and being hath him, more properly than he hath being. *De Divinis nomin. Cp. 5.*

what else. And inasmuch as there is no middle sort of being betwixt necessary and not necessary, and all that is not necessary is caused, it is plain that which is necessary must be the cause of all the rest. And surely what is the cause of all being besides its own, must needs, one way or other, contain its own and all other in itself, and is consequently comprehensive of the utmost fulness of being; or is the absolutely perfect being, (as must equally be acknowledged,) unless any one would imagine himself to have got the notice of some perfection that lies without the compass of all being.

Nor is it an exception worth the mentioning, that there may be a conception of possible being or perfection, which the necessary being hath not caused. For it is, manifestly, as well the possible cause of all possible being and perfection, as the actual cause of what is actual. And what it is possible to it to produce, it hath within its productive power, as hath been said before.

And if the matter did require it, we might say further, that the same necessary being which hath been the productive cause, is also the continual root and basis of all being, which is not necessary. For what is of itself, and cannot, by the special privilege of its own being, but be, needs nothing to sustain it, or needs not trust to any thing besides its own eternal stability. But what is not so, seems to need a continual reproduction every moment, and to be no more capable of continuing in being by itself, than it was, by itself, of coming into being. For (as is frequently alleged by that so often mentioned author) since there is no connexion betwixt the present and future time, but what is easily capable of rupture, it is no way consequent that, because I am now, I shall therefore be the next moment, further than as the free Author of my being shall be pleased to continue his own most arbitrary influence, for my support. This seems highly probable to be true, whether that reason signify any thing or nothing. And that, thence also, continual conservation differs not from creation. Which, whether (as is said by the same author) it be one of the things that are manifest by natural light, or whether a positive act be needless to the annihilation of created things, but only the withholding of influence, let them examine that apprehend the cause to need it. And if, upon inquiry, they judge it at least evidenceable by natural light to be so, (as I doubt not they will,) they will have this further ground upon which thus to reason: that, inasmuch as the necessary being subsists wholly by itself, and is that whereon all other doth

totally depend, it hereupon follows, that it must, some way, contain in itself all being. We may yet further add,

5. That the necessary being we have evinced, though it hath caused and doth continually sustain all things, yet doth not itself in the mean time suffer any diminution. It is not possible, nor consistent with the very terms *necessary being*, that it can. It is true, that if such a thing as a necessary atom were admitted, that would be also undiminishable, it were not else an atom. But as nothing then can flow from it, as from a perfect parvitude nothing can, so it can effect nothing. And the reason is the same of many as of one. Nor would undiminishableness, upon such terms, signify any thing to the magnifying the value of such a trifle.

But this is none of the present case: for our eyes tell us here is a world in being, which we are sure is not itself necessarily; and was therefore made by him that is. And that, without mutation or change in him; against which the very notion of a necessary being is most irreconcilably reluctant; and therefore without diminution, which cannot be conceived without change. *

Wherefore how inexhaustible a fountain of life, being, and all perfection, have we here represented to our thoughts! from whence this vast universe is sprung, and is continually springing, and that in the mean time receiving no recruits or foreign supplies, yet suffers no impairment or lessening of itself! What is this but absolute all-fulness! And it is so far from arguing any deficiency or mutability in his nature, that there is this continual issue of power and virtue from him, that it demonstrates its high excellency that this can be without decay or mutation. For of all this, we are as certain as we can be of any thing: that many things are not necessarily, that the being must be necessary from whence all things else proceed, and that with necessary being change is inconsistent. It is therefore unreasonable to entertain any doubt that things *are so*, which most evidently appear to be so, only because it is beyond our measure and compass to apprehend *how they are so*. And it would be to doubt, against our own eyes, whether there be any such thing as motion in the world, or com-

* Ἐν δὲ ταὐτῇ τῇ χορείᾳ, καθοπᾶ πηγὴν μὲν ζωῆς, πηγὴν δὲ νῦ, ἀρχὴν ὄντων, ἀγαθοῦ αἰτίαν, ῥίζαν ψυχῆς ἐκ ἐκχεομένων ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὐ ἐκείνων ἐλαττόντων— In this harmonic arrangement, behold the fountain both of life and of intellect, the beginning of all that exists, the efficient cause of good; while neither he, nor those primordial principles themselves, are capable of any diminution. *Plotinus Enn.* 6. *l.* 9. *c.* 9.

position of bodies, because we cannot give a clear account, so as to avoid all difficulties, and the entanglement of the common sophisms about them, how these things are performed. In the present case, we have no difficulty but what is to be resolved into the perfection of the Divine Nature, and the imperfection of our own. And how easily conceivable is it, that somewhat may be more perfect, than that we can conceive it. If we cannot conceive the manner of God's causation of things, or the nature of his causative influence, it only shews their high excellency, and gives us the more ground (since this is that into which both his own revelation and the reason of things most naturally lead us to resolve all) to admire the mighty efficacy of his all-creating and all-sustaining will and word; that in that easy unexpensive way, by his mere fiat, so great things should be performed.

6. We only say further, that this necessary Being is such to which nothing can be added; so as that it should be really greater, or better, or more perfect, than it was before. And this not only signifies that nothing can be joined to it, so as to become a part of it, (which necessary being, by its natural immutability, manifestly refuses,) but we also intend by it, that all things else, with it, contain not more of real perfection than it doth alone. Which, though it carries a difficulty with it that we intend not wholly to overlook when it shall be seasonable to consider it, is a most apparent and demonstrable truth. For it is plain that all being and perfection which is not necessary, proceeds from that which is, as the cause of it; and that no cause could communicate any thing to another which it had not, some way, in itself. Wherefore it is manifestly consequent that all other being was wholly before comprehended in that which is necessary, as having been wholly produced by it. And what is wholly comprehended of another, that is, within its productive power, before it be produced, can be no real addition to it, when it is.

Now what can be supposed to import fulness of being and perfection, more than this impossibility of addition, or that there can be nothing greater or more perfect?

And now these considerations are mentioned, without solicitude whether they be so many exactly distinct heads. For admit that they be not all distinct, but some are involved with others of them, yet the same truth may more powerfully strike some understandings in one form of representation, others in another. And it suffices, that (though not severally) they do together plainly evidence that the necessary being includes the

absolute, entire fulness of all being and perfection actual and possible within itself.

Having therefore thus dispatched that *first* part of this undertaking, the eviction of an every way perfect being, we shall now need to labour little in the *second*, namely, the more express deduction of the infiniteness and onliness thereof.

I. For as to the former of these, it is in effect the same thing that hath been already proved; since to the fullest notion of infiniteness, absolute perfection seems every way most fully to correspond. For absolute perfection includes all conceivable perfection, leaves nothing excluded. And what doth most simple infiniteness import, but to have nothing for a boundary, or, which is the same, not to be bounded at all?

We intend not now, principally, infiniteness *ex*trinsically considered, with respect to time and place, as to be *eternal* and *immense* do import; but *in*trinsically, as importing bottomless profundity of essence, and the full confluence of all kinds and degrees of perfection, without bound or limit. This is the same with absolute perfection: which yet, if any should suspect not to be so, they might, however, easily and expressly prove it of the necessary being, upon the same grounds that have been already alleged for proof of that:—as that the necessary being hath actuality answerable to the utmost possibility of the creature; that it is the only root and cause of all other being, the actual cause of whatsoever is actually; the possible cause of whatsoever is possible to be: which is most apparently true, and hath been evidenced to be so, by what hath been said, so lately, as that it needs not be repeated. That is, in short, that nothing that is not necessarily, and of itself, could ever have been or can be, but as it hath been or shall be put into being by that which is necessarily, and of itself. So that this is as apparent as that any thing is, or can be.

But now let sober reason judge, whether there can be any bounds or limits set to the possibility of producible being; either in respect of kinds, numbers, or degrees of perfection? Who can say or think, when there can be so many sorts of creatures produced, (or at least individuals of those sorts,) that there can be no more? Or that any creature is so perfect as that none can be made more perfect? Which indeed, to suppose, were to suppose an actual infiniteness in the creature. And then it being, however, still but somewhat that is created or made, how can its maker but be infinite? For surely nobody will be so absurd as to imagine an infinite effect of a finite cause.

II. Having evinced the infiniteness of this Being, it will be

necessary, before we proceed to the onliness thereof, to inquire if the creature can be actually infinite: for it follows either that the creature is, or some time may be, actually made so perfect that it cannot be more perfect, or not. If not, we have our purpose; that there is an infinite possibility on the part of the creature, always unreplete; and consequently, a proportionable infinite actuality of power on the Creator's part. Infinite power, I say, otherwise there were not that acknowledged infinite possibility of producible being. For nothing is producible, that no power can produce, be the intrinsic possibility of it (or its not-implying in itself, a contradiction that it should exist) what it will. And I say infinite actual power, because the Creator, being what he is necessarily, what power he hath not actually, he can never have, as was argued before. But if it be said, the creature either is, or may some time be, actually so perfect as that it cannot be more perfect; that, as was said, will suppose it then actually infinite; and therefore much more that its cause is so. And therefore in this way our present purpose would be gained also. But we have no mind to gain it this latter way, as we have no need. It is in itself plain, to any one that considers, that this possibility on the creature's part can never actually be filled up; that it is a bottomless abyss, in which our thoughts may still gradually go down deeper and deeper, without end: that is, that still more might be produced, or more perfect creatures, and still more, everlastingly, without any bound; which sufficiently infers what we aim at, that the Creator's actual power is proportionable. And indeed the supposition of the former can neither consist with the Creator's perfection, nor with the imperfection of the creature; it would infer that the Creator's productive power might be exhausted; that he could do no more, and so place an actual boundary to him, and make him finite. It were to make the creature actually full of being, that it could receive no more, and so would make that infinite. But it may be said, since all power is in order to act, and the very notion of possibility imports that such a thing, of which it is said, may, some time, be actual; it seems very unreasonable to say, that the infinite power of a cause cannot produce an infinite effect; or that infinite possibility can never become infinite actuality. For that were to say and unsay the same thing, of the same; to affirm omnipotency and impotency of the same cause; possibility and impossibility of the same effect.

How urgent soever this difficulty may seem, there needs

nothing but patience and attentive consideration to disentangle ourselves, and get through it. For if we will but allow ourselves the leisure to consider, we shall find that *power* and *possibility* must here be taken not simply and abstractly, but as each of them is in conjunction with *infinite*. And what is infinite, but that which can never be travelled through, or whereof no end can be ever arrived unto? Now suppose infinite power had produced all that it could produce, it were no longer infinite, there were an end of it: that is, it had found limits and a boundary beyond which it could not go. If infinite possibility were filled up, there were an end of that also; and so neither were infinite.

It may then be further urged, that there is therefore no such thing as infinite power or possibility. For how is that cause said to have infinite power, which can never produce its proportionable effect, or that effect have infinite possibility, which can never be produced? It would follow then, that power and possibility, which are said to be infinite, are neither power nor possibility; and that *infinite* must be rejected as a notion either repugnant to itself, or to any thing unto which we shall go about to affix it.

I answer, It only follows, they are neither power nor possibility, whereof there is any bound or end; or that can ever be gone through. And how absurd is it that they shall be said, as they cannot but be, to be both very vast, if they were finite; and none at all, for no other reason but their being infinite! And for the pretended repugnancy of the very notion of infinite, it is plain, that though it cannot be to us distinctly comprehensible, yet it is no more repugnant than the notion of finiteness. Nor when we have conceived of power, in the general, and in our own thoughts set bounds to it, and made it finite, is it a greater difficulty (nay, they that try will find it much easier) again to think away these bounds, and make it infinite? And let them that judge the notion of infiniteness inconsistent, therefore reject it if they can. They will feel it reimposing itself upon them, whether they will or no, and sticking as close to their minds as their very thinking power itself. And who was therefore ever heard of, that did not acknowledge some or other infinite? Even the Epicureans themselves, though they confined their gods, they did not the universe. Which, also, though some *Peripatetic* atheists made finite in respect of place, yet in duration they made it infinite. Though the notion of an eternal world is incumbered with such absurdities and impossibilities, as whereof there

is not the least shadow, in that, of an every way infinite Deity.

Briefly, it consists not with the nature of a contingent being, to be infinite. For what is upon such terms, only, in being, is reducible to nothing, at the will and pleasure of its maker; but it is a manifest repugnancy, that what is at the utmost distance from nothing (as infinite fulness of being cannot but be) should be reducible thither. Therefore actual infinity cannot but be the peculiar privilege of that which is necessarily.

Yet may we not say, that it is not within the compass of infinite power to make a creature that may be infinite. For it argues not want of power that this is never to be done, but a still infinitely abounding surplusage of it, that can never be drained or drawn dry. Nor, that the thing itself is simply impossible. It may be, as is compendiously expressed by that most succinct and polite writer, Dr. Boyle,* *in fieri*, not *in facto esse*. That is, it might be a thing always *in doing*, but *never done*. Because it belongs to the infinite perfection of God, that his power be never actually exhausted; and to the infinite imperfection of the creature, that its possibility or capacity be never filled up: to the necessary self-subsisting being, to be always full and communicative; to the communicated contingent being, to be ever empty and craving. One may be said to have that, some way, in his power, not only which he can do presently, all at once, but which he can do by degrees, and supposing he have sufficient time. So a man may be reckoned able to do that, as the uttermost, adequate effect of his whole power, which it is only possible to him to have effected, with the expiration of his life's-time. God's measure is eternity. What if we say then, this is a work possible to be accomplished, even as the ultimate, proportionable issue of *divine power*, (if it were his will, upon which all contingent being depends,) that the creature should be ever growing in the mean while, and be absolutely perfect at the expiration of eternity? If then you be good at suppositions, suppose that expired, and this work finished, both together. Wherefore if you ask, Why can the work of making created being infinite, never be done? The answer will be, Because eternity (in every imaginable instant whereof, the inexhaustible power of God can, if he will, be still adding either more creatures, or more perfection to a creature) can never be at an end.

* Bishop of Clogher, in his *Contemplat. Metaphys.*

We might further argue the infinity of the necessary being, from what hath been said of its *undiminishableness*, by all its vast communications. * Its impossibility to receive any *accession* to itself, by any its so great productions, both which are plainly demonstrable, as we have seen, of the necessary being, even as it is such, and do clearly, as any thing can, bespeak *infinity*. But we have thence argued its absolute perfection, which so evidently includes the same thing, that all this latter labour might have been spared; were it not that it is the genius of some persons not to be content that they have the substance of a thing said, unless it be also said in their own terms. And that the express asserting of God's simple infiniteness, in those very terms, is, in that respect, the more requisite, as it is a form of expression more known and usual.

III. There are yet some remaining difficulties in the matter we have been discoursing of; which partly through the debility of our own minds we cannot but find, and which partly the subtlety of sophistical wits doth create to us. It will be requisite we have some consideration of at least some of them, which we will labour to dispatch with all possible brevity; leaving those that delight in the sport of tying and loosing knots, or of weaving snares wherein cunningly to entangle themselves, to be entertained by the *school-men;* among whom they may find enough, upon this subject, to give them exercise unto *weariness;* and, if their minds have any relish of what is more savory, I may venture to say, unto *loathing*.

It may possibly be here said, in short, But what have we all this while been doing? We have been labouring to prove that necessary being comprehends the absolute fulness of all being: and what doth this signify, but that all being is necessary? That God is all things, and so that every thing is God; that we hereby confound the being of a man, yea, of a stone, or whatever we can think of, with one another, and all with the being of God.

And again, how is it possible there should be an infinite self-subsisting being? For then how can there be any finite, since such infinite being includes all being, and there can be nothing beyond all?

* For howsoever disputable it may be, whether whatsoever is infinite can have nothing added to it; yet it is without dispute, that whatsoever is so full as that nothing can be added to it, is infinite.

Here therefore it is requisite, having hitherto only asserted, and endeavoured to evince that, some way, necessary being doth include all being, to shew in what way. And it is plain it doth not include all, in the same way. It doth not so include that which is created by it and depends on it, as it doth its own, which is uncreated and independent.

The one it includes as its own, or rather as itself; the other, as what it is, and ever was, within its power to produce. If any better like the terms *formally* and *virtually*, they may serve themselves of them at their own pleasure, which yet, as to many, will but more darkly speak the same sense.

We must here know, the productive power of God terminates not upon himself, as if he were, by it, capable of adding any thing to his own appropriate being, which is (as hath been evinced already) infinitely full, and incapable of addition, and is therefore all pure act; but on the creature, where there is still a perpetual possibility, never filled up; because *divine power* can never be exhausted. And thus all that of being is virtually in him, which, either having produced, he doth totally sustain, or not being produced, he can produce.

Whereupon it is easy to understand, how necessary being may comprehend all being, and yet all being not be necessary. It comprehends all being, besides what itself is, as having had, within the compass of its productive power, whatsoever hath actually sprung from it, and having within the compass of the same power, whatsoever is still possible to be produced. Which no more confounds such produced or producible being with that necessary being which is its cause, than it confounds all the effects of human power with one another, and with the being of a man, to say, that he virtually comprehended them (so far as they were producible by him) within his power. And it is no wiser an inference from the former, than it would be from this latter, that a house, a book, and a child, are the same thing with one another, and with the person that produced them; because, so far as they were produced by him, he had it in his power to produce them. And that the effects of *divine power* are produced thereby *totally*, whereas those of human power are produced by it but in *part only*, doth, as to the strength and reasonableness of the argument, nothing alter the case.

And as to the next, That infinite being should seem to exclude all finite. I confess that such as are so disposed, might here even wrangle continually, as they might do about any

thing in which infiniteness is concerned; and yet therein shew themselves (as Seneca I remember speaks in another case) not a whit the more learned, but the more troublesome. But if one would make short work of it, and barely deny that infinite being excludes finite, (as Scotus doth little else;* besides denying the consequence of the argument, by which it was before enforced, namely, [that an infinite body would exclude a finite; for where should the finite be, when the infinite should fill up all space? And therefore by parity of reason, why should not infinite being exclude finite?] shewing the disparity of the two cases,) it would perhaps give them some trouble also to prove it. For which way would they go to work? Infinite self-subsisting being includes all being, very true; and therefore, we say, it includes finite. And what then? Doth it, because it includes it, therefore exclude it? And let the matter be soberly considered; somewhat of finite being and power, we say, (and apprehend no knot or difficulty in the matter,) can extend so far as to produce some proportionable effect, or can do such and such things. And what, doth it seem likely then, that infinite being and power can therefore do just nothing? Is it not a reason of mighty force, and confoundingly demonstrative, that an agent can do nothing, or cannot possibly produce any the least thing, only because he is of infinite power?

For if there be a simple inconsistency between an infinite being and a finite, that will be the case; that, because the former is infinite, therefore it can produce nothing. For what it should produce cannot consist with it, that is, even not being *finite;* and then certainly if we could suppose the effect *infinite*, much less. But what, therefore, is power the less for being infinite? or can infinite power, even because it is infinite, do nothing? What can be said or thought more absurd, or void of sense? Or shall it be said that the infiniteness of power is no hinderance, but the infiniteness of being? But how wild an imagination were that of a finite being, that were of infinite power? And besides, is that power somewhat, or nothing? Surely it will not be said it is nothing. Then it is some being; and if some power be some being, what then is infinite power, is not that infinite being? And now, therefore, if this infinite can produce any thing, which it were a strange madness to deny, it can at least produce some finite thing. Wherefore there is no inconsistency between the infinite and

* Distinct. 2. Q. 2. Q. 1.

finite beings, unless we say the effect produced, even by being produced, must destroy, or even infinitely impair its cause, so as to make it cease at least to be infinite! But that also cannot possibly be said of that which is infinite and necessary; which, as hath been shewn, cannot, by whatsoever productions, suffer any diminution or decay. If here it be further urged, But here is an infinite being now supposed; let, next, be supposed the production of a finite: this is not the same with the other; for surely infinite, and finite, are distinguishable enough, and do even infinitely differ. This finite is either something or nothing; nothing it cannot be said; for it was supposed a being, and produced; but the production of nothing, is no production. It is somewhat then; here is therefore an infinite being, and a finite, now besides. The infinite, it was said, cannot be diminished; the finite, a real something, is added. Is there therefore nothing more of existent being than there was before this production? It is answered, Nothing more than virtually was before; for when we suppose an infinite being, and afterwards a finite; this finite is not to be looked upon as emerging or springing up of itself out of nothing, or as proceeding from some third thing as its cause, but as produced by that infinite, or springing out of that, which it could not do, but as being before virtually contained in it. For the infinite produces nothing, which it could not produce. And what it could produce, was before contained in it, as in the power of its cause. And to any one that attends, and is not disposed to be quarrelsome, this is as plain and easy to be understood, as how any finite thing may produce another, or rather, more plain and easy, because a finite agent doth not entirely contain its effect within itself, or in its own power, as an infinite doth. If yet it be again said, that which is limited is not infinite, but suppose any finite thing produced into being after a pre-existent infinite, this infinite becomes now limited; for the being of the finite, is not that of the infinite, each hath its own distinct being. And it cannot be said of the one, it is the other; therefore each is limited to itself. I answer; that which was infinite becomes not hereby less than it was; for it hath produced nothing but what was before virtually contained in it, and still is, for it still totally sustains the other. But whatsoever it actually doth, it can do, or hath within its power: therefore it were infinite before, and is not now become less, it is still infinite.

Wherefore the true reason why the position of a finite thing after a supposed all-comprehending infinite, doth no way in-

trench upon or detract from the other's all-comprehensive infinity, is, that it was formerly contained, and still is, within the virtue and power of the other.

It is true, that if we should suppose any thing besides that supposed infinite to be of itself, that would infer a limitation of the former. Infer, I say, not cause it, that is, it would not make it cease to be all-comprehendingly infinite, but it would argue it not to have been so before; and that the supposition of its infinity was a false supposition, because it would then appear that the former did not comprehend all being any way in itself. Somewhat being now found to be in being, which hath no dependence thereon; whence it would be evident neither can be so. Of which, some good use may be made to a further purpose by and by.

Here only we may by the way annex, as a just corollary, from the foregoing discourse, that as the supposition of necessary self-subsisting matter was before shewn to be a *vain*, it now also appears plainly to be altogether an *impossible* supposition. For since the necessary self-subsisting being is infinite and all-comprehensive; and if matter were supposed necessary, we must have another necessary being to form the world, inasmuch as matter is not self-active, much less intelligent, as it hath both been proved it cannot be, and that the Former of this world must be. It is therefore out of question, that because both cannot be all-comprehensive, they cannot both be necessary. Nor can the vastly different kinds or natures of these things salve the business; for be they of what kinds they will, they are still beings. Besides, if matter were necessary and self-subsisting, every particle of it must be so. And then we shall have not only two, but an infinite number of such infinites, and all of the same kind. But being, only of this or that sort, (as is apparent where more sorts do exist than one,) could not be simply infinite, except as the other depends thereon; and as this one is radically comprehensive of all the rest, that can come under the general and most common notion of being. For that there is some general notion wherein all being agrees, and by which it differs from no being, is, I think, little to be doubted; how unequally soever, and dependently the one upon the other, the distinct sorts do partake therein. Whereupon the expressions, *super-essential*, and others like it, spoken of God, must be understood as rhetorical strains, importing more reverence than rigid truth. Except by essence, as was formerly said, only that which is created be meant. And that only a purer and more noble kind of essence

were intended to be asserted to him,* which yet seems also unwarrantable and injurious, that a word of that import should be so misapplied and transferred from the substance, to signify nothing but the shadow, rather, of being. And that they who would seem zealously concerned to appropriate all being unto God, should, in the height of their transport, so far forget themselves as to set him above all being, and so deny him any at all. For surely that which simply is above all being, is no being.

2. And as to the unity, or onliness rather, of this being, or of the God-head, the deduction thereof seems plain and easy from what hath been already proved; that is, from the absolute perfection thereof. For though some do toil themselves much about this matter, and others plainly conclude that it is not to be proved at all in a rational way, but only by divine revelation; yet I conceive, they that follow the method (having proved some necessary self-subsisting being, the root and original spring of all being and perfection, actual and possible, which is as plain as any thing can be) of deducing from thence the absolute, all-comprehending perfection of such necessary being, will find their work as good as done. For nothing seems more evident, than that there cannot be two (much less more) such beings, inasmuch as one comprehends in itself all being and perfection; for there can be but one all, without which is nothing. So that, one such being supposed, another can have nothing remaining to it. Yea, so far is it therefore, if we suppose one infinite and absolutely perfect being, that there can be another, independent thereon, (and of a depending infinity, we need not say more than we have, which if any such could be, cannot possibly be a distinct God,) that there cannot be the minutest, finite thing, imaginable, which that supposed infinity doth not comprehend, or that can stand apart from it, on any distinct basis of its own. And that this matter may be left as plain as we can make it; supposing it already most evident, namely, That there is, actually existing, an absolute, entire fulness of wisdom, power, and so of all

* And we must suppose somewhat agreeable to this to be the meaning of Plotinus, when he denies knowledge to be in God, and yet also denies that there is in him any ignorance; that is, that he means his intelligence is of an infinitely distinct and more excellent sort from that which he causes in us, as appears by his annexed reason, τὸ δὲ πάντων αἴτιον, οὐδέν ἐστιν ἐκείνων—*That which is the efficient cause of all things, cannot be one of those things of which it is the cause.* Enn. 6. l. 9. c. 6.

other perfection—That such absolute entire fulness of perfection, is infinite—That this infinite perfection must have its primary seat somewhere—That its primary, original seat can be nowhere, but in necessary self-subsisting being. We hereupon add, that if we suppose multitude, or any plurality of necessary self-originate beings, concurring to make up the seat or subject of this infinite perfection; each one must either be of finite and partial perfection, or infinite and absolute. Infinite and absolute it cannot be, because one self-originate, infinitely and absolutely perfect being will necessarily comprehend all perfection, and leave nothing to the rest. Nor finite, because many finites can never make one infinite; much less can many broken parcels or fragments of perfection ever make infinite and absolute perfection; even though their number, if that were possible, were infinite. For the perfection of unity would still be wanting, and their communication and concurrence to any work (even such as we see is done) be infinitely imperfect and impossible.

We might, more at large, and with a much more pompous number and apparatus of arguments, have shewn that there can be no more Gods than one. But to such as had rather be informed, than bewildered and lost, clear proof that is shorter, and more comprehensive, will be more grateful.

Nor doth this proof of the *unity* of the God-head any way impugn the *trinity*, which is by Christians believed, therein, (and whereof some heathens, as is known, have not been wholly without some apprehension, however they came by it,) or exclude a sufficient, uncreated ground of trinal distinction. As would be seen, if that great difference of beings, *necessary* and *contingent*, be well stated, and what is by eternal, necessary emanation of the divine nature, be duly distinguished from the arbitrary products of the divine will; And the matter be thoroughly examined, whether herein be not a sufficient distinction of that which is uncreated, and that which is created. In this way it is possible it might be cleared, how a *trinity* in the God-head may be very consistently with the *unity* thereof. But that it is, we cannot know, but by his telling us so. It being among the many things of God, which are not to be known, but by the Spirit of God revealing and testifying them, in and according to the holy Scriptures: as the things of a man are not known but by the spirit of a man. And what further evidence we may justly and reasonably take from those Scriptures, even in reference to some of the things hitherto discoursed, may be hereafter shewn.

CHAP. V.

I. Demands in reference to what hath been hitherto discoursed, with some reasonings thereupon: *First*, Is it possible that, upon supposition of *this being's* existence, it may be, in any way suitable to our present state, made known to us that it doth exist? Proved, 1. That it may. 2. That, since any other fit way that can be thought on is as much liable to exception as that we have already, *this* must be, therefore, sufficient. II. Strong impressions. III. Glorious apparitions. IV. Terrible voices. V. Surprising transformations. VI. If these necessary, is it needful they be universal? frequent? VII. If not, more rare things of this sort not wanting. *Second*, Demand. Can subjects, remote from their prince, sufficiently be assured of his existence? *Third*, Demand. Can we be sure there are men on earth? VIII. Reflections.

I. AND if any should in the mean time still remain either doubtful, or apt to cavil, after all that hath been said for proof of *that being's* existence which we have described, I would only add these few things, by way of inquiry or demand; namely,

First, Do they believe, upon supposition of the existence of such a Being, that it is possible it may be made kown to us, in our present state and circumstances, by means not unsuitable thereto, or inconvenient to the order and government of the world, that it doth exist? It were strange to say or suppose, that a Being of so high perfection as this we have hitherto given an account of, *if he is*, cannot in any fit way make it known that *he is*, to an intelligent and apprehensive sort of creatures.

1. If indeed *he is*; and be the common Cause, Author, and Lord of us and all things, (which we do now but suppose: and we may defy cavil to allege any thing that is so much as colourable against the possibility of the supposition,) surely he hath done greater things than the making of it known that he is. It is no unapprehensible thing. There hath been no inconsistent notion hitherto given of him; nothing said concerning him, but will well admit that it is possible such a Being may be now existent. Yea, we not only can conceive, but we actually have, and cannot but have, some conception of the several attributes we have ascribed to him; so as to apply them, severally, to somewhat else, if we will not apply them,

jointly, to him. We cannot but admit there is some eternal, necessary being; somewhat that is of itself active; somewhat that is powerful, wise, and good. And these notions have in them no repugnancy to one another; wherefore it is not impossible they may meet, and agree together, in full perfection to one and the same existent being. And hence it is manifestly no unapprehensible thing, that such a Being doth exist. Now supposing that it doth exist, and hath hath been to us the cause and Author of our being; hath given us the reasonable, intelligent nature which we find ourselves possessors of; and that very power whereby we apprehend the existence of such a Being as he is to be possible, (all which we for the present do still but suppose,) while also his actual existence is not unapprehensible; were it not the greatest madness imaginable to say, that if he do exist, he cannot also make our apprehensive nature understand this apprehensible thing that he doth exist? We will therefore take it for granted, and as a thing which no man well in his wits will deny, that upon supposition such a Being, the Cause and Author of all things, do exist, he might, in some convenient way or other, with sufficient evidence, make it known to such creatures as we, so as to beget in us a rational certainty that he doth exist.

2. Upon which presumed ground we will only reason thus or assume to it; That there is no possible and fit way of doing it which is not liable to as much exception as the evidence we already have. Whence it will be consequent, that if the thing be possible to be fitly done, it is done already. That is, that if we can apprehend how it may be possible such a Being, actually existent, might give us that evidence of his existence that should be suitable to our present state, and sufficient to out-weigh all objections to the contrary; (without which it were not rationally sufficient;) and that we can apprehend no possible way of doing this, which will not be liable to the same, or equal objections, as may be made against the present means we have for the begetting of this certainty in us, then we have already sufficient evidence of this Being's existence. That is, such as ought to prevail against all objections, and obtain our assent that it doth exist.

Here it is only needful to be considered what ways can be thought of, which we will say might assure us in this matter, that we already have not. And what might be objected against them, equally, as against the means we now have.

II. Will we say such a Being, if he did actually exist, might ascertain us of his existence, by some *powerful impres-*

sion of that truth upon our minds? We will not insist, what there is already. Let them consider, who gainsay what they can find of it in their own minds; and whether they are not engaged by their atheistical inclinations in a contention against themselves, and their more natural sentiments, from which they find it a matter of no small difficulty to be delivered? It was not for nothing, that even Epicurus himself calls this of an existing Deity, a *proleptical notion*. But you may say, the impression might have been simply universal, and so irresistible, as to prevent or overbear all doubt, or inclination to doubt.

And, for the *universality* of it, why may we not suppose it already *sufficiently universal?* As hath been heretofore alleged. With what confidence can the few dissenting atheists, that have professed to be of another persuasion, put that value upon themselves, as to reckon their dissent considerable enough to implead the universality of this impression! Or what doth it signify more to that purpose, than some few instances may do, of persons so stupidly foolish, as to give much less discovery of any rational faculty than some beasts; to the impugning the universal rationality of mankind.

Besides that, your contrary profession is no sufficient argument of your contrary persuasion, much less, that you never had any stamp or impression of a Deity upon your minds, or that you have quite razed it out. It is much to be suspected that you hold not your contrary persuasion, with that unshaken confidence, and freedom from all fearful and suspicious misgivings, as that you have much more reason to brag of your disbelief for the strength, than you have for the goodness of it. And that you have those qualmish fits, which bewray the impression, (at least to your own notice and reflection, if you would but allow yourselves the liberty of so much converse with yourselves,) that you will not confess, and yet cannot utterly deface. But if in this you had quite won the day, and were masters of your design, were it not pretty to suppose that the common consent of mankind would be a good argument of the existence of a Deity, except only that it wants your concurrence? If it were *so universal* as to include your vote and suffrage, it would then be a firm and solid argument; (as no doubt it is, without you, a stronger one than you can answer;) but when you have made a hard shift to withdraw your assent, you have undone the Deity, and religion! Doth this cause stand and fall with you? Unto which you can con-

tribute about as much as the fly to the triumph! Was that true before, which now your hard-laboured dissent had made false? But if this impression were simply universal, so as also to include you, it matters not what men would say or object against it; (it is to be supposed they would be in no disposition to object any thing;) but what were to be said, or what the case itself, objectively considered, would admit. And though it would not (as now it doth not) admit of any thing to be said to any purpose, yet the same thing were still to be said, that you now say. And if we should but again unsuppose so much of the former supposition, as to imagine that some few should have made their escape, and disburthened themselves of all apprehensions of God, would they not, with the same impudence as you now do, say that all religion were nothing else but enthusiastical fanaticism; and that all mankind, besides themselves, were enslaved fools?

And for the mere *irresistibleness* of this impression; it is true, it would take away all disposition to oppose, but it may be presumed this is none of the rational evidence which we suppose you to mean; when you admit (if you do admit) that, some way or other, the existence of such a being might be possibly made so evident, as to induce a rational certainty thereof. For to believe such a thing to be true only upon a strong impulse, (how certain soever the thing be,) is not to assent to it upon a foregoing reason. Nor can any, in that case, tell *why* they believe it, but *that* they believe it. You will not surely think any thing the truer for this, only, that such and such believe it with a sturdy confidence. It is true, that the universality and naturalness of such a persuasion, as pointing us to a common cause thereof, affords the matter of an argument, or is a medium not contemptible nor capable of answer, as hath been said before.

But to be *irresistibly* captivated into an assent, is no medium at all; but an immediate persuasion of the thing itself, without a reason.

III. Therefore must it yet be demanded of atheistical persons, what means, that you yet have not, would you think sufficient to have put this matter out of doubt? Will you say, Some kind of very *glorious apparitions*, becoming the majesty of such a one as this Being is represented, would have satisfied? But if you know how to fancy, that such a thing as the sun, and other luminaries, might have been compacted of a certain peculiar sort of atoms, coming together of their

own accord, without the direction of a wise agent; yea, and consist so long, and hold so strangely regular motions; how easy would it be to object that, with much advantage, against what any temporary apparition, be it as glorious as you can imagine, might seem to signify to this purpose.

IV. Would *dreadful loud voices* proclaiming him to be, of whose existence you doubt, have served the turn? It is likely, if your fear would have permitted you to use your wit, you would have had some subtle invention how, by some odd rencounter of angry atoms, the air or clouds might become thus terribly vocal. And when you know already, that they do sometimes salute your ears with very loud sounds, (as when it thunders,) there is little doubt but your great wit can devise a way how possibly such sounds might become articulate. And for the sense and coherent import of what were spoken; you that are so good at conjecturing how things might casually happen, would not be long in making a guess that might serve that turn also; except you were grown very dull and barren, and that fancy that served you to imagine how the whole frame of the universe, and the rare structure of the bodies of animals, yea, and even the reasonable soul itself, might be all casual productions, cannot now devise how, by chance, a few words (for you do not say you expect long orations) might fall out to be sense though there were no intelligent speaker.

V. But would *strange and wonderful effects* that might surprise and amaze you do the business? We may challenge you to try your faculty, and stretch it to the uttermost; and then tell us what imagination you have formed of any thing more strange and wonderful, than the already extant frame of nature, in the whole, and the several parts of it. Will he that hath a while considered the composition of the world; the exact and orderly motions of the sun, moon, and stars; the fabric of his own body, and the powers of his soul, expect yet a wonder, to prove to him there is a God? But if that be the complexion of your minds, that it is not the greatness of any work, but the novelty and surprisingness of it, that will convince you, it is not rational evidence you seek: nor is it your reason, but your idle curiosity, you would have gratified; which deserves no more satisfaction than that fond wish, that one might come from the dead to warn men on earth, lest they should come into the place of torment.

VI. And if such means as these that have been mentioned should be thought necessary, I would ask, Are they necessary

to *every individual person*, so as that no man shall be esteemed to have had sufficient means of conviction, who hath not with his own eyes beheld some such *glorious apparition*; or himself heard some such *terrible voice*; or been the immediate witness or subject of some *prodigious wonderful work*? Or will the *once* seeing, hearing, or feeling them suffice? Is it not necessary there should be a *frequent repetition* and renewal of these amazing things, lest the impression wearing off, there be a relapse, and a gradual sliding into an oblivion, and unapprehensiveness of that Being's existence, whereof they had, sometime, received a conviction. Now if such a continual iteration of these strange things were thought necessary, would they not hereby soon cease to be strange? And then if their strangeness was necessary, by that very thing, wherein their sufficiency for conviction is said to consist, they should become useless. Or if by their frequent variations (which it is possible to suppose) a perpetual amusement be still kept up in the minds of men, and they be always full of consternation and wonder, doth this temper so much befriend the exercise of reason, or contribute to the sober consideration of things? As if men could not be rational, without being half mad! And indeed they might soon become altogether so, by being but a while beset with objects so full of terror, as are by this supposition made the necessary means to convince them of a Deity. * And were this a fit means of ruling the world, of preserving order among mankind? What business could then be followed? Who could attend the affairs of their callings? Who could either be capable of governing, or of being governed, while all men's minds should be wholly taken up, either in the amazed view or the suspenseful expectation, of nought else but strange things? To which purpose much hath been of late, with so excellent reason, † discoursed by a noted author, that it is needless here to say more. And the aspect and influence of this state of things would be most pernicious upon religion, that should be most served thereby, and which requires the greatest severity and most peaceful composure of mind to the due managing the exercises of it. How little would that contribute to pious and devout

* Now were not that a most improper course, and unsuitable to the nature of man, that should rather tend to destroy his reason or judgment, than convince it?

† Dr. Spencer, of *Prodigies*. A discourse, which, though it disproves not the reality or true significancy of such portents, yet aptly tends to prevent or correct the ill use of them.

converses with God, that should certainly keep men's minds in a continual commotion and hurry? This course, as our present condition is, what could it do but craze men's understandings, as a too bright and dazzling light causeth blindness, or any over-excelling sensible object destroys the sense; so that we should soon have cause to apply the Erpen. proverb, "Shut the windows, that the house may be light." And might learn to put a sense, not intolerable, upon those passages of some mystical writers, * that God is to be seen τὶς ὁ θεὸς γνόφῳ—*in a divine cloud or darkness*, as one; and as another † speaks, with closed eyes; though what was their very sense I will not pretend to tell; μύσαντας ἐνεδρύεσθαι τῇ ἀγνώστῳ καὶ κρυφίῳ τῶν ὄντων ἑνάδι—*shutting their eyes to endeavour to comprehend or attain the knowledge of the unknown and hidden unity; the source of beings.*

Besides that, by this means, there would naturally ensue the continual excitation of so vexatious and enthralling passions, so servile and tormenting fears and amazements, as could not but hold the souls of men under a constant and comfortless restraint from any free and ingenuous access to God, or conversation with him; wherein the very life of religion consists. And then, to what purpose doth the discovery and acknowledgment of the Deity serve? Inasmuch as it is never to be thought that the existence of God is a thing to be known, only that it may be known; but that the end it serves for, is religion; a complacential and cheerful adoration of him, and application of ourselves, with, at once, both dutiful and pleasant affections towards him. That were a strange means of coming to know that he is, that should only tend to destroy or hinder the very end itself of that knowledge. Wherefore all this being considered, it is likely it would not be insisted upon as necessary to our being persuaded of God's existence, that he should so multiply strange and astonishing things, as that every man might be a daily, amazed, beholder and witness of them.

VII. And if their frequency and constant iteration be acknowledged not necessary, but shall indeed be judged wholly inconvenient, more *rare* discoveries of him, in the very ways we have been speaking of, have not been wanting. What would we think of such an appearance of God as that was upon Mount Sinai, when he came down (or caused a sensible glory

* Dionysius Areop. l. de myster. Theol. c. 1.
† Proclus in Plat. Theol.

to descend) in the sight of all that great people; wherein the several things concurred that were above mentioned! Let us but suppose such an appearance, in all the concurrent circumstances of it, as that is said to have been. That is, we will suppose an equally great assembly or multitude of people is gathered together, and solemn forewarning is given and proclaimed among them, by appointed heralds or officers of state, that, on such a prefixed day, now very nigh at hand, the Divine majesty and glory (even his glory set in majesty) will visibly appear, and shew itself to them. They are most severely enjoined to prepare themselves, and be in readiness against that day. Great care is taken to sanctify the people, and the place; bounds are set about the designed theatre of this great appearance; all are strictly required to observe their due and awful distances, and abstain from more audacious approaches and gazings; lest that terrible glory break out upon them, and they perish: an irreverent or disrespectful look, they are told, will be mortal to them, or a very touch of any part of this sacred inclosure. In the morning of the appointed day, there are thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the hallowed mount. The exceeding loud sound of trumpet proclaims the Lord's descent. He descends in fire, the flames whereof envelop the trembling mount, (now floored with a sapphire pavement, clear as the body of heaven,) and ascend into the middle region, or, as it is expressed, into the midst or heart of the heavens. The voice of words, (a loud and dreadful voice,) audible to all that mighty assembly, in which were six hundred thousand men, (probably more than a million of persons,) issues forth from amidst that terrible glory, pronouncing to them that *I am Jehovah thy God.* And thence proceeding to give them precepts so plain and clear, so comprehensive and full, so unexceptionably just and righteous, so agreeable to the nature of man, and subservient to his good, that nothing could be more worthy the great Creator, or more aptly suitable to such a sort of creatures.

It is very likely, indeed, that such a demonstration would leave no spectator in doubt concerning the existence of God; and would puzzle the philosophy of the most sceptical atheist to give an account, otherwise, of the phænomenon. And if such could devise to say any thing that should seem plausible to some very easy half-witted persons, that were not present, they would have a hard task of it to quiet the minds of those that were; or make them believe this was nothing else but some odd conjuncture of certain fiery atoms, that, by some

strange accident happened into this occursion and conflict with one another; or some illusion of fancy, by which so great a multitude were all at once imposed upon; so as that they only seemed to themselves to hear and see, what they heard and saw not. Nor is it likely they would be very confident of the truth of their own conjecture, or be apt to venture much upon it themselves; having been the eye and ear-witnesses of these things.

But is it necessary this course shall be taken to make the world know there is a God? Such an appearance, indeed, would more powerfully strike sense; but unto sober and considerate reason were it a greater thing than the making such a world as this, and the disposing this great variety of particular beings in it, into so exact and elegant an order; and the sustaining and preserving it in the same state, through so many ages? Let the vast and unknown extent of the whole, the admirable variety, the elegant shapes, the regular motions, the excellent faculties and powers of that inconceivable number of creatures contained in it, be considered. And is there any comparison between that temporary, transient, occasional, and this steady, permanent, and universal discovery of God? Nor (supposing the truth of the history) can it be thought the design of this appearance to these Hebrews was to convince them of the existence of a Deity, to be worshipped; when of both they had so convincing evidence many ways before; and the other nations, that which they left, and those whither they went, were not without their religion and worship, such as it was: but to engage them, by so majestic a representation thereof, to a more exact observance of his will, now made known. Though, had there been any doubt of the former, (as we can hardly suppose they could before have more doubted of the being of a God, than that there were men on earth,) this might collaterally, and besides its chief intention, be a means to confirm them concerning that also: but that it was necessary for that end, we have no pretence to imagine. The like may be said, concerning other miracles heretofore wrought, that the intent of them was to justify the divine authority of him who wrought them, to prove him sent by God, and so countenance the doctrine or message delivered by him. Not that they tended (otherwise than on the by) to prove God's existence: much less, was this so amazing an appearance needful, or intended for that end; and least of all, was it necessary that this should be God's ordinary way of making it known to men that he doth exist: so as that for

this purpose he should often repeat so terrible representations of himself. And how inconvenient it were to mortal men, as well as unnecessary, the astonishment wherewith it possessed that people, is an evidence; and their passionate affrighted wish thereupon, "Let not God any more speak to us, lest we die." They apprehended it impossible for them to outlive such another sight!

And if that so amazing an appearance of the Divine Majesty (sometime afforded) were not necessary; but some way, on the by, useful, for the confirming that people in the persuasion of God's existence, why may it not be useful also, for the same purpose even now, to us? Is it that we think that can be less true now, which was so gloriously evident to be true four thousand years ago? Or is it that we can disbelieve or doubt the truth of the history? What should be the ground or pretence of doubt? If it were a fiction, it is manifest it was feigned by some person that had the use of his understanding, and was not beside himself, as the coherence and contexture of parts doth plainly shew. But would any man not beside himself, designing to gain credit to a forged report of a matter of fact, ever say there were six hundred thousand persons present at the doing of it? Would it not rather be pretended that it was done in a corner? Or is it imaginable it should never have met with contradiction? That none of the pretended by-standers should disclaim the avouchment of it, and say they knew of no such matter? Especially if it be considered that the laws said to be given at that time, chiefly those which were reported to have been written in the two tables, were not so favourable to vicious inclinations, nor that people so strict and scrupulous observers of them; but that they would have been glad to have had any thing to pretend, against the authority of the legislature, if the case could have admitted it. When they discovered, in that and succeeding time, so violently prone and unretractable a propension to idolatry and other wickednesses, directly against the very letter of that law, how welcome and covetable a plea had it been, in their frequent, and, sometimes, almost universal apostasies, could they have had such a thing to pretend, that the law itself that curbed them was a cheat! But we always find, that though they laboured, in some of their degeneracies, and when they were lapsed into a more corrupted state, to render it more easy to themselves by favourable glosses and interpretations; yet, even in the most corrupt, they never went about to deny or implead its divine original, whereof they were ever so religious

assertors, as no people under heaven could be more; and the awful apprehension whereof prevailed so far with them, as that care was taken (as is notoriously known) by those appointed to that charge, that the very letters should be numbered of the sacred writings, lest there should happen any the minutest alteration in them. Much more might be said, if it were needful, for the evincing the truth of this particular piece of history: and it is little to be doubted but any man who, with sober and impartial reason, considers the circumstances relating to it; the easily evidenceable antiquity of the records whereof this is a part; the certain nearness of the time of writing them, to the time when this thing is said to have been done; the great reputation of the writer even among pagans; the great multitude of the alleged witnesses and spectators; the no-contradiction ever heard of; the universal consent and suffrage of that nation through all times to this day, even when their practice hath been most contrary to the laws then given; the securely confident and unsuspicious reference of later pieces of sacred Scripture thereto, (even some parts of the New Testament,) as a most known and undoubted thing; the long series and tract of time through which that people are said to have had extraordinary and sensible indications of the divine presence; (which, if it had been false, could not, in so long a time, but have been evicted of falsehood;) their miraculous and wonderful eduction out of Egypt, not denied by any, and more obscurely acknowledged by some heathen writers; their conduct through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their constitution and form of polity, known for many ages to have been a theocracy; their usual ways of consulting God, upon all more important occasions:—whosoever, I say, shall soberly consider these things, (and many more might easily occur to such as would think fit to let their thoughts dwell awhile upon this subject,) will not only, from some of them, think it highly improbable, but from others of them, plainly impossible that the history of this appearance should have been a contrived piece of falsehood. Yea, and though, as was said, the view of such a thing with one's own eyes would make a more powerful impression upon our fancy, or imagination, yet, if we speak of rational evidence (which is quite another thing) of the truth of a matter of fact that were of this astonishing nature, I should think it were as much (at least if I were credibly told that so many hundred thousand persons saw it at once) as if I had been the single unaccompanied spectator of it myself. Not to say that it were ap-

parently, in some respect, much greater; could we but obtain of ourselves to distinguish between the pleasing of our curiosity, and the satisfying of our reason. So that, upon the whole, I see not why it may not be concluded, with the greatest confidence, that both the (supposed) existence of a Deity is possible to be certainly known to men on earth, in some way that is suitable to their present state; that there are no means fitter to be ordinary, than those we already have, and that more extraordinary, additional confirmations are partly, therefore, not necessary, and partly not wanting.

Again, *Secondly*, It may be further demanded, (as that which may both immediately serve our main purpose, and may also shew the reasonableness of what was last said,) Is it sufficiently evident to such subjects of some great prince as live remote from the royal residence, that there is such a one now ruling over them?

To say No, is to raze the foundation of civil government, and reduce it wholly to domestical, by such a ruler as may ever be in present view. Which yet is upon such terms never possible to be preserved also. It is plain many do firmly enough believe that there is a king reigning over them, who not only never saw the king, but never heard any distinct account of the splendour of his court, the pomp of his attendance, or, it may be, never saw the man that had seen the king. And is not all dutiful and loyal obedience wont to be challenged and paid of such, as well as his other subjects? Or would it be thought a reasonable excuse of disloyalty, that any such persons should say they had never seen the king, or his court? Or a reasonable demand, as the condition of required subjection, that the court be kept, sometime, in their village, that they might have the opportunity of beholding at least some of the insignia of regality, or more splendid appearances of that majesty, which claims subjection from them? Much more would it be deemed unreasonable and insolent, that every subject should expect to see the face of the prince every day, otherwise they will not obey, nor believe there is any such person. Whereas it hath been judged rather more expedient and serviceable to the continuing the veneration of majesty, (and in a monarchy of no mean reputation for wisdom and greatness,) that the prince did very rarely offer himself to the view of the people. Surely more ordinary and remote discoveries of an existing prince and ruler over them, (the effects of his power, and the influences of his government,) will be reckoned sufficient, even as to many parts of his dominions

that possibly through many succeeding generations never had any other. And yet how unspeakably less sensible, less immediate, less constant, less necessary, less numerous, are the effects and instances of regal human power and wisdom, than of the divine; which latter we behold which way soever we look, and feel in every thing we touch, or have any sense of, and may reflect upon in our very senses themselves, and in all the parts and powers that belong to us; and so certainly, that if we would allow ourselves the liberty of serious thoughts, we might soon find it were utterly impossible such effects should ever have been without that only cause: that without its influence, it had never been possible that we could hear, or see, or speak, or think, or live, or be any thing, nor that any other thing could ever have been, when as the effects that serve so justly to endear and recommend to us civil government, (as peace, safety, order, quiet possession of our rights,) we cannot but know, are not inseparably and incommunicably appropriate, or to be attributed to the person of this or that particular and mortal governor, but may also proceed from another: yea and the same benefits may (for some short time at least) be continued without any such government at all. Nor is this intended merely as a rhetorical scheme of speech, to beguile or amuse the unwary reader: but, without arrogating any thing, or attributing more to it, than that it is an altogether in-artificial and very defective, but true and naked representation of the very case itself as it is. It is professedly propounded, as having somewhat solidly argumentative in it. That is, that (whereas there is most confessedly sufficient, yet) there is unspeakably less evidence to most people in the world, under civil government; that there actually is such a government existent over them; and that they are under obligation to be subject to it; than there is of the existence of a Deity, and the consequent reasonableness of religion. If therefore the ordinary effects and indications of the former be sufficient, which have so contingent and uncertain a connexion with their causes, (while those which are more extraordinary are so exceeding rare with the most,) why shall not the more certain ordinary discoveries of the latter be judged sufficient, though the most have not the immediate notice of any such extraordinary appearances as those are which have been before mentioned?

Moreover, *Thirdly*, I yet demand further, whether it may be thought possible for any one to have a full rational certainty that another person is a reasonable creature, and hath

in him a rational soul, so as to judge he hath sufficient ground and obligation to converse with him, and carry towards him as a man? Without the supposition of this, the foundation of all human society and civil conversation is taken away. And what evidence have we of it, whereunto that which we have of the being of God (as the foundation of religious and godly conversation) will not at least be found equivalent.

Will we say that mere human shape is enough to prove such a one a man? A philosopher would deride us, as the Stagyrite's disciples are said to have done the Platonic man. But we will not be so nice. We acknowledge it is, if no circumstances concur (as sudden appearing, vanishing, transformation or the like) that plainly evince the contrary; so far as to infer upon us an obligation not to be rude and uncivil; that we use no violence, nor carry ourselves abusively towards one that only thus appears a human creature. Yea, and to perform any duty of justice or charity towards him within our power, which we owe to a man as a man. As suppose we see him wronged or in necessity, and can presently right or relieve him; though he do not or cannot represent to us more of his case than our own eyes inform us of. And should an act of murder be committed upon one whose true humanity was not otherwise evident, would not the offender be justly liable to the known and common punishment of that offence? Nor could he acquit himself of transgressing the laws of humanity, if he should only neglect any seasonable act of justice or mercy towards him, whereof he beholds the present occasion. But if any one were disposed to cavil, or play the sophist, how much more might be said, even by infinite degrees, to oppose this single evidence of any one's true humanity, than ever was or can be brought against the entire concurrent evidence we have of the existence of God. It is, here, most manifestly just and equal, thus to state the case, and compare the whole evidence we have of the latter, with that one of the former; inasmuch as that one alone is apparently enough to oblige us to carry towards such a one as a man. And if that alone be sufficient to oblige us to acts of justice or charity towards man, he is strangely blind that cannot see infinitely more to oblige him to acts of piety towards God.

But if we would take a nearer and more strict view of this parallel, we would state the general and more obvious aspect of this world on the one hand, and the external aspect and shape of a man on the other; and should then see the former

doth evidence to us an in-dwelling Deity diffused through the whole and actuating every part with incomparably greater certainty, than the latter doth, an in-dwelling reasonable soul. In which way we shall find what will aptly serve our present purpose, though we are far from apprehending any such union of the blessed God with this world, as is between the soul and body of a man. It is manifestly possible to our understandings, that there may be, and (if any history or testimony of others be worthy to be believed) certain to experience and sense, that there often hath been, the appearance of human shape and of agreeable actions without a real man. But it is no way possible such a world as this should have ever been without God. That there is a world, proves that eternal Being to exist, whom we take to be God, (suppose we it as rude a heap as at first it was, or as we can suppose it,) as external appearance represents to us that creature which we take to be a man: but *that* as a certain infallible discovery, necessarily true; *this* but as a probable and conjectural one, and (though highly probable) not impossible to be false.

And if we will yet descend to a more particular inquiry into this matter, which way can we fully be ascertained that this supposed man is truly and really what he seems to be? This we know not how to go about, without recollecting what is the differencing notion we have of a man; that he is a reasonable, living creature, or a reasonable soul, inhabiting, and united with a body. And how do we think to descry that, here, which may answer this common notion we have of a man? Have we any way besides that discovery which the acts and effects of reason do make of a rational or intelligent Being? We will look more narrowly, that is, unto somewhat else than his external appearance; and observe the actions that proceed from a more distinguishing principle in him, that he reasons, discourses, doth business, pursues designs; in short, he talks and acts as a reasonable creature: and hence we conclude him to be one, or to have a reasonable soul in him.

And have we not the same way of procedure in the other case? Our first view or taking notice of a world full of life and motion, assures us of an eternal active Being, besides it, which we take to be God, having now before our eyes a darker shadow of him only, as the external bulk of the human body is only the shadow of a man. Which, when we behold it stirring and moving, assures us there is somewhat besides that grosser bulk, (that of itself could not so move,) which we take to be the soul of a man. Yet, as a principle that can move

the body makes not up the entire notion of this soul, so an eternal active being, that moves the matter of the universe, makes not up the full notion of God. We are thus far sure in both cases, that is, of some mover distinct from what is moved. But we are not yet sure, by what we hitherto see, what the one or the other is. But as when we have upon the first sight thought it was a reasonable soul that was acting in the former; or a man, (if we will speak according to their sense who make the soul the man,) in order to being sure, (as sure as the case can admit,) we have no other way, but to consider what belongs more distinguishingly to the notion of a man, or of a reasonable soul; and observe how actions and effects, which we have opportunity to take notice of, do answer thereto, or serve to discover that. So when we would be sure what that eternal active Being is (which that it is, we are already sure, and) which we have taken to be God, that, I say, we may be sure of that also, we have the same thing to do. That is, to consider what more peculiarly belongs to the entire notion of God, (and would even in the judgment of opposers be acknowledged to belong to it,) and see whether his works, more narrowly inspected, do not bear as manifest correspondency to that notion of God, as the works and actions of a man do to the notion we have of him. And certainly we cannot but find they do correspond as much. And that upon a serious and considerate view of the works and appearances of God in the world; having diligently observed and pondered the vastness and beauty of this universe, the variety, the multitude, the order, the exquisite shapes and numerous parts, the admirable and useful composure, of particular creatures; and especially the constitution and powers of the reasonable soul of man itself; we cannot, surely, if we be not under the possession of a very voluntary and obstinate blindness, and the power of a most vicious prejudice, but acknowledge the making, sustaining, and governing such a world, is as God-like, as worthy of God, and as much becoming him, according to the notion that hath been assigned of him, as at least the common actions of ordinary men, are of a man; or evidence the doer of them to be a human creature. Yea, and with this advantageous difference, that the actions of a man do evidence a human creature more uncertainly, and so as it is possible the matter may be otherwise. But these works of God do with so plain and demonstrative evidence discover him the Author of them, that it is altogether impossible they could ever otherwise have been done.

Now therefore, if we have as clear evidence of a Deity, as

we can have, in a way not unsuitable to the nature and present state of man; (and we can have in a suitable way, that which is sufficient;) if we have clearer and more certain evidence of God's government over the world, than most men have or can have, of the existence of their secular rulers; yea, more sure than that there are men on earth, and that thence (as far as the existence of God will make towards it) there is a less disputable ground for religious than for civil conversation; we may reckon ourselves competently well ascertained, and have no longer reason to delay the dedication of a temple to him, upon any pretence of doubt, whether we have an object of worship existing, yea or no.

Wherefore we may also by the way take notice how impudent a thing is atheism, that by the same fulsome and poisonous breath whereby it would blast religion, would despoil man of his reason and apprehensive power, even in reference to the most apprehensible thing; would blow away the rights of princes, and all foundations of policy and government, and destroy all civil commerce and conversation out of the world, and yet blushes not at the attempt of so foul things.

VIII. And here it may perhaps prove worth our while (though it can be no pleasant contemplation) to pause a little, and make some short *reflections* upon the atheistical temper and genius, so as therein to remark some few more obvious characters of atheism itself.

And such as have not been themselves seized by the infatuation, cannot but judge it, *first*, a most unreasonable thing, a perverse and cross-grained humour, that so oddly writhes and warps the mind of a man, as that it never makes any effort or offer at any thing against the Deity; but it therein doth (by a certain sort of serpentine involution and retortion) seem to design a quarrel with itself: that is, with (what one would think should be most intimate and natural to the mind of man) his very reasoning power, and the operations thereof. So near indeed was the ancient alliance between God and man, (his own Son, his likeness and living image,) and consequently between reason and religion, that no man can ever be engaged in an opposition to God and his interest, but he must be equally so to himself and his own. And any one that takes notice how the business is carried by an atheist, must think, in order to his becoming one, his first plot was upon himself: to assassine his own intellectual faculty, by a sturdy resolution, and violent imposing on himself, not to consider, or use his thoughts, at least, with any indifferency, but with a treacherous predeter-

mination to the part resolved on before-hand. Otherwise, it is hard to be imagined how it should ever have been possible that so plain and evident proofs of a Deity as every where offer themselves unto observation, even such as have been here proposed, (that do even lie open, for the most part, to common apprehension, and needed little search to find them out; so that it was harder to determine what not to say, than what to say,) could be over-looked.

For what could be more easy and obvious, than taking notice that there is somewhat in being, to conclude that somewhat must be of itself, from whence whatever is not so, must have sprung? That, since there is somewhat effected or made, (as is plain, in that some things are alterable, and daily altered, which nothing can be that is of itself, and therefore, a necessary being,) those effects have then had an active being for their cause? That since these effects are partly such as bear the manifest characters of wisdom and design upon them, and are partly, themselves, wise and designing; therefore they must have had a wisely active and designing cause? So much would plainly conclude the sum of what we have been pleading for; and what can be plainer or doth require a shorter turn of thoughts? At this easy expense might any one that had a disposition to use his understanding to such a purpose, save himself from being an atheist. And where is the flaw? What joint is not firm and strong in this little frame of discourse? which yet arrogates nothing to the contriver; for there is nothing in it worthy to be called contrivance: but things do themselves lie thus. And what hath been further said concerning the perfection and oneness of this Cause of all things, (though somewhat more remote from common apprehension,) is what is likely would appear plain and natural to such as would allow themselves the leisure to look more narrowly into such things.

Atheism therefore seems to import a direct and open hostility against the most native, genuine, and facile dictates of common reason. And being so manifest an enemy to it, we cannot suppose it should be at all befriended by it. For reason will be always true and constant to itself, whatsoever false shews of it a bad cause doth sometimes put on; that having yet somewhat a more creditable name, and being of a little more reputation in the world, than plain downright madness and folly. And it will appear how little it is befriended, by any thing that can justly bear that name, if we consider the pitiful shifts the atheist makes for his forlorn cause; and what infirm tottering supports the whole frame of atheism rests upon.

For what is there to be said for their hypothesis, or against the existence of God, and the dueness of religion? For it, there is directly nothing at all. Only a possibility is alleged, things might be as they are, though God did not exist. And if this were barely possible, how little doth that signify? Where reason is not injuriously dealt with, it is permitted the liberty of balancing things equally, and of considering which scale hath most weight. And is he not perfectly blind, that sees not what violence is done to free reason in this matter? Are there not thousands of things, not altogether impossible, which yet he would be concluded altogether out of his wits, that should profess to be of the opinion they are, or were actually so? And as to the present case, how facile and unexceptionable, how plain and intelligible, is the account that is given of the original of this world, and the things contained in it, by resolving all into a Deity, the Author and Maker of them? Whereas the wild, extravagant suppositions of atheists, if they were admitted possible, are the most unlikely that could be devised. So that if there had been any to have laid wagers, when things were taking their beginning, there is nobody that would not have ventured thousands to one, that no such frame of things (no not so much as one single mouse or flea) would ever have hit. And how desperate hazards the atheist runs, upon this mere supposed possibility, it will be more in our way to take notice by and by. But besides, that pretended possibility plainly appears none at all. It is impossible any thing should spring up of itself out of nothing; that any thing that is alterable, should have been necessarily of itself, such as it now is; that what is of itself unactive, should be the maker of other things; that the Author of all the wisdom in the world, should be, himself, unwise. These cannot but be judged most absolute impossibilities, to such as do not violence to their own minds; or with whom reason can be allowed any the least exercise. Wherefore the atheistical spirit is most grossly unreasonable, in withholding assent, where the most ungainsayable reason plainly exacts it.

And are not the atheist's cavils as despicably silly against the Deity, and (consequently) religion? Whosoever shall consider their exceptions against some things in the notion of God, eternity, infinity, &c. which themselves, in the mean time, are forced to place elsewhere, will he not see they talk idly? And as for such other impeachments of his wisdom, justice, and goodness, as they take their ground for, from the state of affairs, in some respects, in this present world, (many

of which may be seen in Lucretius, and answered by Dr. More in his *Dialogues*,) how inconsiderable will they be, to any one that bethinks himself, with how perfect and generous a liberty this world was made, by one that needed it not; who had no design, nor could have inclination to a fond, self-indulgent glorying and vaunting of his own work; who did it with the greatest facility, and by an easy, unexpensive vouchsafement of his good pleasure; not with an operose curiosity, studious to approve itself to the peevish eye of every froward *Momus*, or to the nauseous, squeamish gust of every sensual *Epicure*. And to such as shall not confine their mean thoughts to that very clod or ball of earth on which they live; which, as it is a very small part, may, for aught we know, but be the worst or most abject part of God's creation, which yet is full of his goodness, and hath most manifest prints of his other excellencies besides, as hath been observed; or that shall not look upon the present state of things as the eternal state, but upon *this world* only as an antichamber to *another*, which shall abide in most unexceptionable perfection for ever:—how fond and idle, I say, will all such cavils appear to one that shall but thus use his thoughts, and not think himself bound to measure his conceptions of God, by the uncertain, rash dictates of men born in the dark, and that talk at random; nor shall affix any thing to him, which plain reason doth not dictate, or which he doth not manifestly assume, or challenge to himself. But that because a straw lies in my way, I would attempt to overturn heaven and earth, what raging frenzy is this?

Again, it is, *secondly*, a base, abject temper, speaks a mind sunk and lost in carnality, and that having dethroned and abjured reason, hath abandoned itself to the hurry of vile appetite, and sold its liberty and sovereignty for the insipid, gustless pleasures of sense; an unmanly thing—a degrading of one's self. For if there be no God, what am I? A piece of moving, thinking clay, whose ill-compacted parts will shortly fly asunder, and leave no other remains of me than what shall become the prey and triumph of worms!

It is, *thirdly*, a sad, mopish, disconsolate temper; cuts off and quite banishes all manly, rational joy; all that might spring from the contemplation of the divine excellencies and glory, shining in the works of his hands. Atheism clothes the world in black, draws a dark and duskish cloud over all things; doth more to damp and stifle all relishes of intellectual pleasure, than it would of sensible, to extinguish the sun. What is this world (if we should suppose it still to subsist) without

God? How grateful an entertainment is it to a pious mind to behold his glory stamped on every creature, sparkling in every providence; and by a firm and rational faith to believe (when we cannot see) how all events are conspiring to bring about the most happy and blissful state of things? The atheist may make the most of this world; he knows no pleasure, but what can be drawn out of its dry breasts, or found in its cold embraces; which yields as little satisfaction, as he finds, whose arms, aiming to inclose a dear friend, do only clasp a stiff and clammy carcass. How uncomfortable a thing is it to him, that having neither power nor wit to order things to his own advantage or content, but finds himself liable to continual disappointments, and the rencounter of many an unsuspected, cross accident, hath none to repose on, that is wiser and mightier than himself? But when he finds he cannot command his own affairs, to have the settled apprehension of an Almighty Ruler, that can with the greatest certainty do it for us the best way, and will, if we trust him—how satisfying and peaceful a repose doth this yield? And how much the rather, inasmuch as that filial, unsuspicious confidence and trust, which naturally tends to and begets that calm and quiet rest, is the very condition required on my part; and that the chief thing I have to do, to have my affairs brought to a good pass, is to commit them to his management; and my only care, to be careful in nothing. The atheist hath nothing to mitigate the greatness of this loss, but that he knows not what he loses; which is an allay that will serve but a little while. And when the most unsupportable, pressing miseries befal him, he must in bitter agonies groan out his wretched soul without hope, and sooner die under his burden, than say, Where is God my Maker? At the best, he exchanges all the pleasure and composure of mind which certainly accompany a dutiful, son-like trust, submission, and resignation of ourselves, and all our concernments, to the disposal of fatherly wisdom and love, for a sour and sullen succumbency to an irresistible fate or hard necessity, against which he sees it is vain to contend. So that at the best he only not rages, but tastes nothing of consolation; whereof his spirit is as uncapable, as his desperate affairs are of redress. And if he have arrived to that measure of fortitude, as not to be much discomposed with the lighter crosses which he meets with in this short time of life, what a dreadful cross is it that he must die! How dismal a thing is a certain, never to be avoided death! Against which as atheism hath not surely the advantage of religion in giving

protection; so it hath greatly the disadvantage, in affording no relief. What would the joy be worth in that hour, that arises from the hope of the glory to be revealed? And is the want of that, the total sum of the atheist's misery at this hour? What heart can conceive the horror of that one thought, if darted in upon him at that time, (as it is strange, and more sad, if it be not,) What becomes now of me, if there prove to be a God? Where are my mighty demonstrations, upon which one may venture, and which may cut off all fear and danger of future calamity in this dark, unknown state I am going into? Shall I be the next hour nothing, or miserable? Or if I had opportunity, shall I not have sufficient cause to proclaim, (as * once one of the same fraternity did, by way of warning to a surviving companion)—A great and a terrible God! A great and a terrible God! A great and a terrible God!

I only add, it is, *fourthly*, a most strangely mysterious and unaccountable temper; such as is hardly reducible to its proper causes: so that it would puzzle any man's inquiry to find out or even give but probable conjectures, how so odd and preternatural a disaffection as atheism should ever come to have place in a human mind. It must be concluded a very complicated disease, and yet, when our thoughts have fastened upon several things that have an aspect that way, as none of them alone could infer it, so it is hard to imagine, how all of them together should ever come to deprave reasonable nature to such a degree.

1. It is most astonishingly marvellous (though it is apparent this distemper hath its rise from an ill will) that any should so much as *will* that which the atheist hath obtained of himself to believe; or affect to be, what he is.

The commonness of this vile disposition of will, doth but sorrily shift off the wonder, and only with those slight and trifling minds that have resigned the office of judging things to their (more active) senses, and have learned the easy way of waving all inquiries about common things, or resolving the account into this only, that they are to be seen every day. But

* Which story I confidently refer to, being of late date, and having had a certain and circumstantial account of it, by one (a very sober and intelligent person) who had the relation from him to whom that dreadful warning was given, by his then lately deceased associate. But I shall not by a particular relation gratify the scorn of this sort of men, who, taking advantage from the (sometime deceived) credulity of well-meaning people, have but that way of answering all such things, by the one word which served once so learnedly to confute Bellarmine.

if we allowed ourselves to consider this matter soberly, we should soon find, that howsoever it must plainly appear a very common plague upon the spirits of men (and universal till a cure be wrought) to say, by way of *wish*, No God, or I would there were none: yet, by the good leave of them who would thus easily excuse the thing, the commonness of this horrid evil doth so little diminish, that it increases the wonder. Things are more strange, as their causes are more hardly assignable. What should the reason be, that a being of so incomparable excellency, so amiable and alluring glory, purity, love, and goodness, is become undesirable and hateful to his own creatures! that such creatures, his more immediate, peculiar offspring, stamped with his likeness, the so vivid resemblances of his own spiritual, immortal nature, are become so wickedly unnatural towards their common and most indulgent parent! what, to wish him dead! to envy life and being, to him from whom they have received their own! It is as strange as it is without a cause. But they have offended him, are in a revolt, and sharply conscious of fearful demerits. And who would not wish to live, and to escape so unsupportable revenge? It is still strange we would ever offend such a one! Wherein were his laws unequal, his government grievous? But since we have, this only is pertinent to be said by them that have no hope of forgiveness, that are left to despair of reconciliation—Why do we sort ourselves with devils? We profess not to be such.

Yea, but we have no hope to be forgiven the sin we do not leave, nor power to leave the sin which now we love. This, instead of lessening, makes the wonder a miracle. O wretched, forlorn creature! Wouldest thou have God out of being for this? (I speak to thee who dost not yet profess to believe there is no God, but dost only wish it.) The sustainer of the world! the common basis of all being! Dost thou know what thou sayest? Art thou not wishing thyself and all things into nothing? This, rather than humble thyself, and beg forgiveness! This, rather than become again a holy, pure, obedient creature, and again blessed in him, who first made thee so! It can never cease, I say, to be a wonder, we never ought to cease wondering, that ever this befel the nature of man, to be prone to *wish* such a thing, that there were no God!

But this is, it is true, the too common case; and if we will only have what is more a rarity go for a wonder, how amazing then is it,

2. That if any man *would*, even never so fain, he ever *can* make himself *believe* there is no God! and shape his horrid course according to that most horrid misbelief! By what fatal train of causes is this ever brought to pass? Into what can we devise to resolve it?

Why such as have arrived to this pitch are much addicted to the pleasing of their senses; and this they make their business; so as that, for a long time, they have given themselves no leisure to mind objects of another nature; especially that should any way tend to disturb them in their easy course; until they are gradually fallen into a forgetful sleep, and the images of things are worn out with them, that had only more slightly touched their minds before. And being much used to go by the suggestions of sense, they believe not what they neither see nor feel.

This is somewhat, but does not reach the mark; for there are many very great sensualists, (as great as they at least,) who never arrive hither, but firmly avow it that they believe a Deity, whatsoever mistaken notion they have of him; whereupon they imagine to themselves impunity in their vicious course.

But these, it may be said, have so disaccustomed themselves to the exercise of their reason, that they have no disposition to use their thoughts about any thing above the sphere of sense; and have contracted so dull and sluggish a temper, that they are no fitter to mind or employ themselves in any speculations that tend to beget in them the knowledge of God, than any man is for discourse or business when he is fast asleep.

So indeed, in reason, one would expect to find it; but the case is so much otherwise, when we consider particular instances, that we are the more perplexed and entangled in this inquiry, by considering how agreeable it is, that the matter should be thus; and observing that it proves, oft-times, not to be so: insomuch that reason and experience seem herein not to agree, and hence we are put again upon new conjectures what the immediate cause of this strange malady should be. For did it proceed purely from a sluggish temper of mind, unapt to reasoning and discourse; the more any were so, the more disposed they should be to atheism: whereas, every one knows that multitudes of persons of dull and slow minds, to any thing of ratiocination, would rather you should burn their houses, than tell them they did not believe in God; and would presently tell you, it were pity he should live, that should but

intimate a doubt whether there were a God or no. Yea, and many, somewhat more intelligent, yet in this matter are shy of using their reason, and think it unsafe, if not profane, to go about to prove that there *is* a God, lest they should move a doubt, or seem hereby to make a question of it. And in the mean time, while they offer not at reasoning, they more meanly supply that want, after a sorry fashion, from their education, the tradition of their fore-fathers, common example, and the universal profession and practice of some religion round about them; and it may be only take the matter for granted, because they never heard such a thing was ever doubted of or called in question in all their lives.

Whereas, on the other hand, they who incline to atheism are perhaps some of them the greatest pretenders to reason. They rely little upon authority of former times and ages, upon vulgar principles and maxims, but are vogued great masters of reason, diligent searchers into the mysteries of nature, and can philosophize (as sufficiently appears) beyond all imagination. But it is hoped it may be truly said, for the vindication of philosophy and them that profess it, that modern atheists have little of that to glory in; and that their chief endowments are only their skill to please their senses, and a faculty with a pitiful sort of drollery to tincture their cups, and add a grace to their otherwise dull and flat conversation. Yet all this howsoever being considered, there is here but little advance made to the finding out whence atheism should proceed. For, that want of reason should be thought the cause, what hath been already said seems to forbid. That many ignorant persons seem possessed with a great awe of a Deity, from which divers, more knowing, have delivered themselves. And yet neither doth the former signify any thing (in just intrepretation) to the disrepute of religion. For truth is not the less true, for that some hold it they know not how or why. Nor doth the latter make to the reputation of atheism, inasmuch as men, otherwise rational, may sometimes learnedly dote. But it confirms us that atheism is a strange thing, when its extraction and pedigree are so hardly found out, and it seems to be directly of the lineage, neither of knowledge nor ignorance, neither sound reason nor perfect dotage.

Nor doth it at all urge to say, And why may we not as well stand wondering, whence the apprehension of a God, and an addictedness to religion should come, when we find them peculiar neither to the more knowing nor the more ignorant?

For they are apparently and congruously enough to be derived from somewhat common to them both—the impression of a Deity, universally put upon the minds of all men, (which atheists have made a shift to raze out, or obliterate to that degree, as to render it illegible,) and that cultivated by the exercise of reason, in some, and in others, less capable of that help, somewhat confirmed by education, and the other accessaries mentioned above.

3. Therefore is this matter still most mysteriously intricate, that there should be *one temper* and *persuasion*, agreeing to *two* so vastly different sorts of persons, while yet we are to seek for a cause (except what is most tremendous to think of) from whence it should proceed, that is common to them both. And here is, in short, the sum of the wonder, that any, not appearing very grossly unreasonable in other matters, (which cannot be denied even of some of the more sensual and lewder sort of atheists,) should, in so plain and important a case, be so, beyond all expression, absurd; that they without scruple are pleased to think like other men in matters that concern and relate to common practice, and wherein they might more colourably, and with less hazard, go out of the common road; and are here only so dangerously and madly extravagant. Their's is therefore the *dementia quoad hoc, a particular madness;* so much the stranger thing, because they whom it possesses do only in this one case put off themselves, and are like themselves and other men in all things else. If they reckoned it a glory to be singular, they might (as hath been plainly shewn) more plausibly profess it as a principle, that they are not bound to believe the existence of any secular ruler (and consequently not be subject to any) longer than they see him, and so subvert all policy and government; or pretend an exemption from all obligation to any act of justice, or to forbear the most injurious violence towards any man, because they are not infallibly certain any one they see is a human wight, and so abjure all morality, as they already have so great a part; than offer with so fearful hazard to assault the Deity, (of whose existence, if they would but think a while, they might be most infallibly assured,) or go about to subvert the foundations of religion. Or, if they would get themselves glory by great adventures, or show themselves brave men by expressing a fearless contempt of divine power and justice; this fortitude is not human. These are without the compass of its object; as inundations, earthquakes, &c., are said to be,

unto which, that any one should fearlessly expose himself, can bring no profit to others, nor therefore glory to him.

In all this harangue of discourse, the design hath not been to fix upon any true cause of atheism, but to represent it a strange thing; and an atheist, a prodigy, a monster, amongst mankind; a dreadful spectacle, forsaken of the common aids afforded to other men; hung up in chains to warn others, and let them see what a horrid creature man may make himself by voluntary aversion from God that made him.

In the mean time, they upon whom this dreadful plague is not fallen, may plainly see before them the object of that worship which is imported by a temple—an existing Deity, a God to be worshipped. Unto whom we shall yet see further reason to design and consecrate a temple for that end, and even ourselves to become such, when we have considered what comes next to be spoken of: his *conversableness with men.*

CHAP. VI.

I. The subject of the second chapter continued; wherein is inquired, SECONDLY, What is intended by God's conversableness with men, considered only as fundamental and presupposed to a temple. II. An account of the Epicurean Deity. 1. Its existence impossible any way to be proved, if it did exist. 2. Nor can be affirmed to any good intent. 3. That such a being is not God. 4. That it belongs to the true notion of God, that he is such as can converse with men. III. That the absolute perfection proved of God represents him a fit object of religion. From thence more particularly deduced to this purpose, *First*, His omniscience. *Secondly*, Omnipotency. *Thirdly*, Unlimited goodness. *Fourthly*, Immensity. IV. Curcellæus's arguments against this last (his immensity) considered.

I. NOR is the thing here intended less necessary to a temple and religion than what we have hitherto been discoursing of. For such a sort of Deity as should shut up itself, and be reclused from all converse with men, would leave us as disfurnished of an object of religion, and would render a temple on earth as vain a thing, as if there were none at all. It were a being not to be worshipped, nor with any propriety to be called God, more (in some respect less) than an image

or statue. We might with as rational design worship for a God what were scarce worthy to be called the shadow of a man, as dedicate temples to a wholly unconversable Deity. That is, to such a one as not only *will not* vouchsafe to converse with men, but that *cannot* admit it; or whose nature were altogether incapable of such converse.

SECONDLY, We are therefore to inquire what is intended by God's conversableness with men? For that measure and latitude of sense must be allowed unto the expression, as that it signifies both capacity and propension to such converse: that God is both by his nature capable of it, and hath a gracious inclination of will thereunto. Yea and we will add, (what is also not without the compass of our present theme nor the import of this word whereby we generally express it,) that he is not only inclined to converse with men, but that he actually doth it. As we call him a conversable person that upon all befitting occasions doth freely converse with such as have any concern with him. It will indeed be necessary to distinguish God's converse with men, into that which he hath in common with *all men*, so as to sustain them in their beings, and some way influence their actions; (in which kind he is also conversant with all his creatures;) and that which he more peculiarly hath with *good men*.

And though the consideration of the latter of these will belong to the discourse concerning his temple itself which he hath with and in them; yet it is the former only we have now to consider as presupposed thereto, and as the ground thereof; together with his gracious propension to the latter also.

As the great Apostle, in his discourse at Athens, lays the same ground for acquaintance with God (which he intimates should be set afoot and continued in another sort of temple than is made with hands) that he hath given to all breath and being and all things, and that he is near and ready, (whence they should therefore seek him, if haply they might feel after him, and find him out,) in order to further converse. And here, our business will have the less in it of labour and difficulty; for that we shall have little else to do, besides only the applying of principles already asserted (or possibly the more express adding of some or other that were implied in what hath been said) to this purpose. From which principles it will appear, that he not only can, but that in the former sense he doth converse with men, and is graciously inclined thereto in the latter. And yet because the former is more deeply fun-

damental, as whereon all depends, and that the act of it is not denied for any other reason than an imagined impossibility; that is, it is not said he doth not sustain and govern the world upon any other pretence, but that he cannot, as being inconsistent with his nature and felicity. This we shall therefore more directly apply ourselves to evince, That his nature doth not disallow it, but necessarily includes an aptitude thereto.

Nor yet, though it may be a less laborious work than the former that we have dispatched, is it altogether needless to deal somewhat more expressly in this matter; inasmuch as what opposition hath been made to religion in the world, hath for the most part been more expressly directed against this ground of it. I say more expressly; for indeed by plain and manifest consequence it impugns that also of God's existence: that is, through this it strikes at the other. For surely (howsoever any may arbitrarily, and with what impropriety and latitude of speech they please, bestow titles and eulogies here or there) that being is not God, that cannot converse with men, supposing them such as what purely and peculiarly belongs to the nature of man would bespeak them. So that they who have imagined such a being, and been pleased to call it God, have at once said and unsaid the same thing. That Deity was but a creature, and that only of their own fancy; and they have by the same breath blown up and blasted their own bubble, made it seem something and signify nothing: have courted it into being, and rioted it again quite out of it. In their conceit, created it a God, in their practice, a mere nullity. And it equally served their turn and as much favoured the design of being wicked, to acknowledge only a God they could imagine and dis-imagine at their own pleasure, as to have acknowledged none at all. It could do no prejudice to their affairs to admit of this fictitious Deity that they could make be what, or where they pleased; that should affect ease and pleasure, and (lest his pleasures and theirs should interfere) that they could confine to remote territories, and oblige to keep at an obedient and untroublesome distance. Nor, though no imagination could be more madly extravagant than that of a God no way concerned in the forming and governing of the world; and notwithstanding whom, men might take their liberty to do what they listed; yet (as hath been observed long ago, that no opinion was ever so monstrously absurd, as not to be owned by some of the philosophers) hath not this wanted patronage, and even among them who have obtained to be esteemed (not to say idolized) under that name. Which

would be seen, if it were worth the while to trouble the reader with an account of the *Epicurean Deity*.

II. This can be done only with this design, that the representation may render it (as it cannot but do) ridiculous to sober men; and discover to the rest, the vanity of their groundless and self-contradicting hope, (still too much fostered in the breasts of not a few,) who promise themselves impunity in the most licentious course of wickedness, upon the security only of this their own idle dream. That is, that if there be a God, (which they reckon it not so plausible flatly to deny,) he is a being of either so dull and phlegmatic a temper that he cannot be concerned in the actions and affairs of men, or so soft and easy that he will not. But because his good will alone was not so safely to be relied on, it was thought the securer way not to let it be in his power to intermeddle with their concernments. And therefore being to frame their own God, to their own turn, the matter was of old contrived thus.

Great care was taken, *First*, That he be set at a distance remote enough; that he be complimented out of this world, as a place too mean for his reception, and unworthy such a presence; they being indeed unconcerned where he had his residence, so it were not too near them. So that a confinement of him somewhere, was thought altogether necessary. *

And then, *Secondly*, With the same pretence of great observance and respect, it is judged too great a trouble to him, and inconsistent with the felicity of his nature and being, that he should have given himself any diversion or disturbance, by making the world; from the care and labour whereof he is with all ceremony to be excused, it being too painful and laborious an undertaking for an immortal and a happy being. Besides that he was altogether destitute of instruments and utensils requisite to so great a performance. †

* Ac designare quidem non licet quibus in locis Dii degant. Cum ne noster quidem hic mundus, digna sit illorum sedes—It is unlawful to assign any places as habitations of the gods; since this world itself is unworthy of being their residence. *Phil. Epicur. Syntag.*

† —ἡ θεία φύσις πρὸς ταῦτα μηδαμῆ προσαγέσθω, ἀλλὰ ἀλειτούργητος διατηρείσθω, καὶ ἐν τῇ πάσῃ μακαριότητι—The divine nature must not be applied to these [inferior] objects, but must be preserved free from all occupation, and in perfect happiness. *Laertius, l.* 10.

Quæ molitio, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ machinæ, qui ministri tanti muneris fuerunt—What toil, what immense machinery, what attendants, must such a task have required! *Vell. apud Cicer. de natura Deorum.*

Whence also, *Thirdly*, He was with the same reason to be excused of all the care and encumbrance of government; * as indeed, what right or pretence could he have to the government of a world that chose him not, which is not his inheritance, and which he never made? But all is very plausibly

* Nihil beatius, nihil omnino bonis omnibus affluentius excogitari potest. Nihil enim agit, nullis occupationibus est implicatus, &c.—Nothing can be imagined more happy, nothing more abundant in all possible kinds of enjoyment: for he does nothing, he is involved in no concerns, &c. *Id.* Ὅταν, τὴν θείαν φύσιν μὴ λειτουργιῶν ἀπολύωσιν—They destroy the divine nature, when they fail to represent it as ceasing from every kind of work. *Laert. ibid.* Itaque imposuistis cervicibus nostris sempiternum dominum, quem, dies & noctes, timeremus. Quis enim non timeat omnia providentem, & cogitantem, & animadvertentem, & omnia ad se pertinere putantem, curiosum & plenum negotii Deum—So you have imposed on our necks a perpetual master, whom we should dread day and night! For who would not dread a God of universal foresight, and thought, and judgment, a God who claimed a right to all things, a God of attention and full of concerns? *Vell. ubi supra.* Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jacere. In terris oppressa gravi sub religione Primum Graius homo mortalis—

> Not thus mankind. Them long the tyrant power
> Of superstition swayed, uplifting proud
> Her head to heaven, and with horrific limbs
> Brooding o'er earth; till he, the man of Greece,
> Auspicious rose. *Good's Transl.*

(*meaning Epicurus, the first champion of irreligion.*) *Lucret. To which purpose besides what we have in Laert.* Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον, ὔτε αὐτὸ πράγματα ἔχει, ὔτε ἄλλῳ παρέχει ὥστε οὔτε ὀργαῖς, οὔτε χάρισι συνέχεσθαι· ἐν ἀσθενεῖ γὰρ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον—The blessed and immortal being hath no affairs to mind, nor attends to any thing so as to be affected by passions either painful or agreeable: for every such affection is an attribute of weakness. *l.* 10. *Much more is collected in the Syntagm.* Nam & præstans Deorum natura hominum pietate coleretur, cum æterna esset & beatissima. Habet enim venerationem justam quicquid excellit. Et metus omnis, à vi atque ira Deorum pulsus esset. Intelligitur enim à beata immortalique natura, & iram & gratiam segregari. Quibus remotis, nullos à superis impendere metus, &c.—The supreme divine nature should be served by the homage of men, since it is eternal and infinitely happy. For all excellence is entitled to respect. All fear from the power and anger of the gods should be banished; for it is the attribute of the blessed and immortal nature to be infinitely remote from the passions of wrath or kindness; which being excluded from our consideration, no dread need be entertained of the gods, &c. *Sect.* 1. *cap.* 3. An & mundum fecit, & in mundo homines ut ab hominibus coleretur? At quid Deo cultus hominum confert, beato, & nulla re indigenti—Did he create the world, and yet is he to be served in the world, as men are by their fellow-men? But what advantage could the services of men confer on God, a being happy in himself and incapable of having any need? *Sect.* 2. *cap.* 3.

shadowed over with a great appearance of reverence and veneration, with magnificent elogies of his never-interrupted felicity; whence also it is made a very great crime not to free even the divine nature itself from business: though yet the true ground and root of this Epicurean faith doth sometime more apparently discover itself, even an impatiency of the divine government, and a regret of that irksome bondage which the acknowledgment of a Deity, that were to be feared by men, would infer upon them.

And therefore, *Fourthly*, He is further expressly asserted to be such as need not be feared, as cares not to be worshipped, as with whom neither anger nor favour hath any place. So that nothing more of duty is owing to him than a certain kind of arbitrary veneration, which we give to any thing or person that we apprehend to excel us, and to be in some respect better than ourselves: an observance merely upon courtesy. But obedience and subjection to his government, fear of his displeasure, expectation of his favour and benefits, have no place left them. We are not obliged to worship him as one with whom we have any concern, and do owe him no more homage than we have to the Great Mogul, or the Cham of Tartary, and indeed are less liable to his severity, or capable of his favours, than theirs; for of theirs, we are in some remote possibility, of his, in none at all. In one word, all converse between him and man, on his part by providence, and on ours by religion, is quite cut off. Which evidently appears (from what hath been already collected out of his own words, and theirs who pretended to speak that so admired author's mind and sense) to be the scope and sum of the Epicurean doctrine, in this matter; and was indeed observed to be so long ago, by one that we may suppose to have had better opportunity and advantages to know it, than we: who, discoursing that a man cannot live pleasantly, according to the principles of Epicurus; and that according to his doctrine beasts are more happy than men; plainly gives this reason *

* Καὶ τοι εἰ μὲν ἐν τῇ προλήψει τὴν θεὸν τὴν προνοιαν ἀπέλιτον, ἐφαίνοντο ἂν ἐλπίσι χρησαῖς πλέον ἔχοντες οἱ φρόνιμοι τῶν θηρίων πρὸς τὸ ἡδέως ζῆν; ἐπεὶ δὲ τελὸς ἦν τὰ περὶ θεῶν λόγε, τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι θεὸν, ἀλλὰ πάνσασθαι πρατίομένες, βεβαιότερον οἶμαι τῦτο, &c.—And truly, as they have left out providence from their conception of the deity, do intellectual beings possess any better hopes of happiness than the beasts? Since their object, in their doctrine about the gods, was to exclude God as an object of fear, and to allay the terrors of men's minds, I deem this a very forcible argument against them. *Plut.*

why he says so, namely, that the Epicureans took away providence, and that the design of their discoursing concerning God was, that we might not fear him.

Unto which purpose also much more may be seen in the same author elsewhere, when he more directly pleads (among divers more philosophical subjects) on behalf of religion against the Epicurean doctrine, which he saith * they leave to us in word and shew, but by their principles take away indeed, as they do nature and the soul, &c.

It is then out of question, that the doctrine of Epicurus utterly takes away all intercourse between God and man. Which yet were little worth our notice or consideration, nor would it answer any valuable end or purpose to revive the mention of such horrid opinions, or tell the world what such a one said or thought two thousand years ago; if their grave had been faithful to its trust, and had retained their filthy poisonous savour within its own unhallowed cell.

But since (against what were so much to have been desired, that their womb might have been their grave) their grave becomes their womb, where they are conceived, and formed anew, and whence by a second birth they spring forth afresh, to the great annoyance of the world, the debauching and endangering of mankind; and that it is necessary some remedy be endeavoured of so mortal an evil, it was also convenient to run it up to its original, and contend against it as in its primitive state and vigour.

Wherefore this being a true (though it be a very short) account of the Epicurean god, resulting all into this shorter sum,

* *Adversus Colotem.* Πῶς οὖν ἀπολείπουσι φύσιν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ ζῶον; ὡς ὅρκον, ὡς εὐχήν, ὡς θυσίαν, ὡς προσκύνησιν, ῥήματι καὶ λόγῳ, καὶ τῷ φάναι καὶ προσποιεῖσθαι καὶ ὀνομάζειν, ἃ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ τοῖς δόγμασιν ἀνιεροῦσιν— How do they apparently admit nature and the soul and a living essence? As they admit of oaths, prayers, sacrifices, and acts of worship; in word and pretence, in simulation and profession, while they destroy them by their principles and doctrines. *To which purpose is that also in Tully.* At etiam de sanctitate, de pietate adversus Deos libros scripsit Epicurus. At quomodo in his loquitur? ut Coruncanium aut Scævolam Pontifices maximos te audire dicas non eum, qui subtulerit omnem funditus religionem: Nec manibus ut Xerxes, sed rationibus Templa Deorum & aras everterit—Yet Epicurus even wrote books on sanctity and on piety to the gods. But how does he speak in them? So that you might suppose you were listening to the *pontifices maximi* Coruncanius or Scævola. He would destroy the temples and altars of the gods, not by violence, like Xerxes, but by arguments. *De natura Deorum.*

That he is altogether unconversable with men, (and such therefore as cannot inhabit their temple, and for whom they can have no obligation or rational design to provide any,) it will be requisite in reference hereto, and suitable to our present scope and purpose, severally to evince these things:—That the existence of such a being as this were impossible ever to be proved unto men, if it did exist—That being supposed without any good ground, it is equally unimaginable that the supposition of it can intend any valuable or good end—That this supposed being cannot be God, and is most abusively so called; as hereby, the true God, the Cause and Author of all things, is intended to be excluded—That it belongs to, and may be deduced from, the true notion of God which hath been given, (and proved by parts of a really existent Being,) that he is such as can converse with men.

1. That there is no way to prove the existence of such a being, is evident. For what ways of proving it can be thought of, which the supposition itself doth not forbid and reject? Is it to be proved by revelation? But that supposes converse with men, and destroys what it should prove, that such a being, having no converse with men, doth exist. And where is that revelation? Is it written or unwritten; or who are its vouchers? Upon what authority doth it rest? Who was appointed to inform the world in this matter? Was Epicurus himself the common oracle? Why did he never tell men so? Did he ever pretend to have seen any of these his vogued gods? No, they are confessed not to be liable to our sense, any more than the inane itself. And what miracles did he ever work to confirm the truth of his doctrine in this matter? Which sure was reasonably to be expected from one who would gain credit to dictates so contrary to the common sentiments of the rest of mankind, and that were not to be proved any other way. And what other way can be devised? Can it admit of rational demonstration? What shall be the medium? Shall it be from the cause? But what cause can (or ever did) he or his followers assign of God? Or from effects? And what shall they be, when the matter of the whole universe is supposed ever to have been of itself, and the particular frame of every thing made thereof, to have resulted only of the casual coalition of the parts of that matter, and no real being is supposed besides? Or shall it be that their idea, which they have of God, includes existence, as so belonging to him that he cannot but exist? But by what right do they affix such an idea to their petite

and fictitious deities? How will they prove their idea true? Or are we bound to take their words for it? Yea it is easily proved false, and repugnant to itself, while they would have that to be necessarily existent (as they must if they will have it existent at all) unto which, in the mean time, they deny the other perfections which necessary existence hath been proved to include. But how vain and idle trifling is it, arbitrarily and by a random fancy to imagine any thing what we please, and attributing of our own special grace and favour necessary existence to it, thence to conclude that it doth exist, only because we have been pleased to make that belong to the notion of it? What so odd and uncouth composition can we form any conception of, which we may not make exist, at this rate?

But the notion of God is not arbitrary, but is natural, proleptical, and common to men, impressed upon the minds of all: whence they say it ought not to be drawn into controversy. What! the Epicurean notion of him? We shall inquire further into that anon. And in the mean time need not doubt to say, any man might with as good pretence imagine the ridiculous sort of gods described in Cicero's ironical supposition,* and affirm them to exist, as they those they have thought fit to feign, and would impose upon the belief of men. And when they have fancied these to exist, is not that a mighty proof that they indeed do so? But that which for the present we allege, is, that supposing their notion were ever so absolutely universal, and agreeing with the common sentiments of all other men, they have yet precluded themselves of any right to argue, from its commonness, to the existence of the thing itself. Nor can they upon their principles form an argument thence, that shall conclude or signify any thing to this purpose. None can be drawn hence, that will conclude immediately and itself reach the mark, without the addition of some further thing, which so ill sorts with the rest of their doctrine, that it would subvert the whole frame. That is, it follows not, that because men generally hold that there is a God, that therefore there is one; otherwise than as that consequence can be justified by this plain and irrefragable proof—That no reason can be devised of so general an agreement, or of that so common an impression upon the minds of

* Deos, Strabones, pætulos, nævum habentes, silos, flaccos, frontones, capitones—Gods deformed, looking asquint, flat-nosed, flap-eared, beetle-browed, jolt-headed. *De Natura Deorum, l.* 1.

men, but this only; that it must have proceeded from one common cause, namely, God himself; who having made man so prime a part of his creation, hath stamped with his own signature this nobler piece of his workmanship, and purposely made and framed him to the acknowledgment and adoration of his Maker.

But how shall they argue so, who, while they acknowledge a God, deny man to be his creature, and will have him and all things to be by chance, or without dependence on any Maker? What can an impression infer to this purpose, that comes no one can tell whence or how; but is plainly denied to be from him, whose being they would argue from it?

The observation of so common an apprehension in the minds of men, might (upon their supposition) beget much wonder, but no knowledge; and may perplex men much, how such a thing should come to pass, without making them any thing the wiser; and would infer astonishment, sooner than a good conclusion, or than it would solidly prove any important truth. And do they think they have salved the business, and given us a satisfying account of this matter, by telling us, This impression is from nature, as they speak? It were to be wished some of them had told us, or could yet tell us, what they meant by nature. Is it any intelligent principle, or was it guided by any such? If yea, whence came this impression, but from God himself? For surely an intelligent Being, that could have this universal influence upon the minds of all men, is much more likely to be God than the imaginary entities they talk of, that are bodies, and no bodies; have blood, and no blood; members, and no members; are somewhere, and nowhere; or if they be any where, are confined to some certain places remote enough from our world; with the affairs whereof, or any other, they cannot any way concern themselves, without quite undoing and spoiling their felicity. If they say No, and that nature, which puts this stamp upon the minds of men, is an utterly unintelligent thing, nor was ever governed by any thing wiser than itself—strange! that blind and undesigning nature should, without being prompted, become thus ignorantly officious to these idle, voluptuary godlings; and should so effectually take course they might be known to the world, who no way ever obliged it, nor were ever like to do! But to regress a little, fain I would know what is this thing they call nature? Is it any thing else than the course and inclination of conspiring atoms, which singly are not pretended to bear any such impression; but as they luckily club and hit together,

in the composition of a human soul, by the merest and strangest chance that ever happened? But would we ever regard what they say whom we believe to speak by chance? Were it to be supposed that characters and words serving to make up some proposition or other, were by some strange agitation of wind and waves impressed and figured on the sand; would we, if we really believed the matter came to pass only by such an odd casualty, think that proposition any whit the truer for being there, or take this for a demonstration of its truth, any more than if we had seen it in a ballad? Because men have casually come to think so, therefore there are such beings, (to be called gods,) between whom and them there never was or shall be any intercourse or mutual concern. It follows as well, as that because the staff stands in the corner, the morrow will be a rainy day. The dictates of nature are indeed most regardable things taken as expressions of his mind, or emanations from him, who is the Author and God of nature: but abstracted from him, they are and signify as much as a beam cut off from the body of the sun; or a person that pretends himself an ambassador, without credentials.

Indeed, (as is imported in the words noted from that grave Pagan (Plutarch) a little before,) the principles of these men destroy quite nature itself, as well as every thing of religion; and leave us the names and shew of them, but take away the things themselves. In sum, though there be no such impression upon the minds of men as that which they talk of, yet if there were, no such thing can be inferred from it, as they would infer; their principles taking away all connexion between the argument, and what they would argue by it.

2. We have also too much reason to add, That as the supposition of such a being, or sort of beings, can have no sufficient ground; so it is equally unconceivable that it can be intended for any good end. Not that we think the last assertion a sufficient sole proof of this; for we easily acknowledge, that it is possible enough men may harmlessly and with innocent intentions attempt the building very weighty and important truths upon weak and insufficient foundations; hoping they have offered that as a support unto truth, which proves only a useless cumber. Nor were it just to impute treachery, where there is ground for the more charitable censure, that the misadventure proceeded only from want of judgment and shortness of discourse. But it is neither needful nor seemly, that the charity which can willingly wink in some cases, should

therefore be quite blind; or that no difference should be made of well-meant mistakes, and mischief thinly hid and covered over with specious pretences. And let it be soberly considered, what can the design be, after the cashiering of all solid grounds for the proving of a Deity, at length to acknowledge it upon none at all? As if their acknowledgment must owe itself not to their reason, but their courtesy. And when they have done what they can to make the rest of men believe they have no need to own any God at all, and they can tell how all that concerns the making and governing the world may well enough be dispatched without any, yet at last they will be so generous as to be content there shall be one, however. What, I say, can the design of this be, that they who have contended with all imaginable obstinacy against the most plain and convincing evidences, that do even defy cavil; have quite fought themselves blind, and lost their eyes in the encounter; so that they are ready to swear the sun is a clod of dirt, and noon-day light is to them the very blackness of darkness? They cannot see a Deity encircling them with the brightest beams, and shining upon them with the most conspicuous glory through every thing that occurs, and all things that encompass them on every side. And yet when all is done, and their thunder-struck eyes make them fancy they have put out the sun: they have won the day, have cleared the field, and are absolute victors; they have vanquished the whole power of their most dreaded enemy, the light that reveals God in his works—after all this, without any inducement at all, and having triumphed over every thing that looked like an argument to prove it, they vouchsafe to say however, of their own accord, There is a God. Surely if this have any design at all, it must be a very bad one. And see whither it tends. They have now a God of their own making; and all the being he hath, depends upon their grace and favour. They are not his creatures, but he is their's; a precarious Deity, that shall be as long, and what, and where, they please to have him. And if he displease them, they can think him back into nothing. Here seems the depth of the design. For see with what cautions and limitations they admit him into being. There shall be a God, provided he be not meddlesome, nor concern himself in their affairs to the crossing of any inclinations or humours which they are pleased shall command and govern their lives; being conscious that if they admit of any at all that shall have to do with their concernments, he cannot but be such as the ways they resolve on will displease. Their very

shame will not permit them to call that God, which if he take any cognizance at all of their course will not dislike it. And herein that they may be the more secure, they judge it the most prudent course, not to allow him any part or interest in the affairs of the world at all.

Yet all this while they court him at a great rate, and all religion is taken away under pretence of great piety: worship they believe he cares not for, because he is full and needs nothing. In this world he must not be, for it is a place unworthy of him. He must have had no hand in framing, nor can they think it fit he should have any in the government of it. For it would be a great disturbance to him, and interrupt his pleasures. The same thing as if certain licentious courtiers, impatient of being governed, should address themselves to their prince in such a form of speech, that it is beneath him to receive any homage from them, it would too much debase majesty; that his dominions afford no place fit for his residence, and therefore it would be convenient for him to betake himself into some other country, that hath better air and accommodation for delight; that diadems and sceptres are burthensome things, which therefore if he will quit to them, he may wholly give up himself to ease and pleasure.

Yea and whatsoever would any way tend to evince his necessary existence, is with the same courtship laid aside; (although if he do not exist necessarily and of himself, he cannot have any existence at all; for as they do not allow him to be the cause of any thing, so they assign nothing to be the cause of him;) that is, with pretence there is no need it should be demonstrated, because all men believe it without a reason, nature having impressed this belief upon the minds of all; or (which is all one) they having agreed to believe it because they believe. But though they have no reason to believe a Deity, they have a very good one why they would seem to do so, that they may expiate with the people their irreligion by a collusive pretending against atheism. And because they think it less plausible plainly to deny there is a God, they therefore grant one to please the vulgar, yet take care it shall be one as good as none, lest otherwise they should displease themselves: and so their credit and their liberty are both cared for together. But this covering is too short, and the art by which they would fit it to their design, when it should cheat others, deceives themselves. For it is most evident,

3. That the being with the pretended belief whereof they would mock the world, is no God; and that consequently,

while they would seem to acknowledge a Deity, they really acknowledge none at all. Our contest hath not, all this while, been a strife about words, or concerning the name, but the thing itself. And not whether there be such a thing in being to which that name may, with whatsoever impropriety, be given, but whether there be such a Being as whereto it properly belongs: supposing, and taking for granted as a matter out of question, that (even in their own sense) if such a being as we have described do exist, it is most properly God; and that they will not go about to call it by another name; or that they will not pretend this name agrees to any other thing so fitly as to him. And because we have already proved this being doth exist, and that there can be but one such, it plainly follows their's is in propriety of speech (even though he did exist) no God; and that much less should he appropriate the name, and exclude the only true God. For since the high and dignifying eulogies, which they are wont to bestow upon their feigned deity, do plainly shew they would have it thought they esteem him the most excellent of all existent Beings; if we have proved a really existent Being to be more excellent than he, it is evident, even upon their own grounds, that this is God. Hither the Deity must be deferred, and their's must yield, and give out: inasmuch as we cannot suppose them so void of common sense, as to say the less excellent being is God, and the more excellent is no God. But if they should be so, (whereas the controversy is not about the name,) we have our main purpose, in having proved there is a Being actually existent, that hath all the real excellencies which they ascribe to their deities, and infinitely more. And as concerning the name, who made them dictators to all the world, and the sole judges of the propriety of words; or with what right or pretence will they assume so much to themselves, so as, against the rest of the world, to name that *God*, from which they cut off the principal perfections wont to be signified by that name? And if we speak of such perfections as tend to infer and establish religion and providence, who, but themselves, did ever call that God in the eminent sense, that they supposed could not hear prayers, and thereupon dispense favours, relieve the afflicted, supply the indigent, and receive suitable acknowledgments? *They indeed* (saith a famed writer* of Roman history) *that exercise themselves in the atheistical sorts*

* ὅσοι μὲν ἂν τὰς ἀθέους ἀσκῶσι φιλοσοφίας, &c. D. Halicarnass. Ant. Rom. l. 2.

of philosophy, (if we may call that philosophy,) as they are wont to jeer at all appearances of the gods, whether among the Greeks or the Barbarians, will make themselves matter of laughter of our histories, not thinking that any God takes care of any man.—Let the story he there tells, shift for itself, in the mean time it appears they escaped not the infamy of atheists, who (whatever deities they might imagine besides) did deny God's presence, and regard to men. Which sort of persons he elsewhere often animadverts upon. But do we need to insist, that all the rest of the world acknowledged no gods, whom they did not also worship? What meant their temples and altars, their prayers and sacrifices? Or did they take him for God, whom they believed to take no care of them, or from whom they expected no advantage? Even the barbarous Scythians themselves understood it most inseparably to belong to a Deity, to be beneficent; when they upbraidingly tell Alexander, * That if he were a God, (as they it seems had heard he vogued himself,) he should bestow benefits upon men, and not take from them what was their own.

And by the way, it is observable how contradictious and repugnant the Epicurean sentiments are in this, even to themselves: that speaking of friendship, † (of which they say many generous and brave things,) they gallantly profess (as Plutarch testifies of them) that it is a more pleasant thing to benefit others than to receive benefits one's self. They yet, while they seem so greatly concerned ‡ that their gods be every way most perfectly happy, deny to them this highest and most excellent part of felicity. That a virtuous man may a great deal more benefit the world than they, and consequently have more pure and lively relishes of a genuine and refined pleasure.

Upon the whole, it is manifest they so maim the notion of God, as to make it quite another thing. And if they think to wipe off any thing of the foul and odious blot wherewith their avowed irreligion hath stained their name and memory, by the acknowledgment of such a God; they effect the like thing by it, and gain as much to the reputation of their piety as he should of his loyalty, who being accused of treason against his prince, shall think to vindicate himself by professing solemnly to own the king; provided you only mean by it the

* See their ambassador's oration, in Q. Curtius.

† Lib. non posse suaviter vivi, &c.

‡ Vid. & lib. maxime cum princip. viris Phil. &c.

king of clubs, or any such painted one the pack affords. But here it may be demanded, Is every misapprehension of God to be understood as a denial of his being? If so, whom can we undertake to assoil of atheism? Or who can certainly acquit himself? For how impossible is it to be sure we have no untrue conception of a Being so infinitely, by our own confession, above all our thoughts? Or how is it to be avoided, in somewhat or other, to think amiss of so unknown and incomprehensibly excellent a Being, either by detracting somewhat that belongs to it, or attributing somewhat that belongs not? And since many, we are sure, have thought and spoken unworthily of God, besides Epicureans, are all these to go into the account of atheists? Or whereas it is commonly wont to be said, Whatsoever is in God, is God: how can they who deny any thing of him, which is really in him, be excused of denying his whole being? Or where will we fix the bounds of our censure?

Many things should be said (if we will speak at all) to so manifold an inquiry: but it belongs not to the design of this discourse to examine and discuss all men's sentiments of God that have been exposed to the view of the world, or arbitrate among the dissenting parties; much less to explain or abet every school-maxim that hath reference to this theme; the authors or lovers whereof will be sufficiently prompted by their own genius to do at least as much as can be requisite herein. But whatever the real sameness is supposed to be, of the things attributed to God, it is acknowledged we cannot but conceive of them as divers; and so that our conception of any one is not adequate to the entire object, which is confessed incomprehensible. Yet any one attribute gives a true notion of the object, so far as it reaches, though not a full. As I may be said truly to see a man, when I only see his face, and view not every part and limb; or to know him, while yet I have not had opportunity to discern every quality in his temper, and what his dispositions and inclinations, in all respects, are. Moreover, it is one thing to deny any divine perfection, another, only not to know it.

And such mere nescience is so far from being guilty of the horrid crime of atheism, that it is not so much as culpable, further than as it is obstinately persisted in, against sufficient evidence: for we are not obliged to know every thing, but what is to us knowable, and what we are concerned to know. Again, (and which is most considerable to our purpose,) we are

not concerned to know what God is in himself, otherwise than as we may thereby know what he is in relation to us, namely, as he is the Author of our beings, the Governor of our lives and actions, and thereupon the Object of our religion; for a religious respect unto him is the very end of that knowledge. Now, if any other than that sort of persons we oppose have taken up apprehensions of him not so suitable to that end, it were to be wished they saw it, and would unthink all those thoughts. But surely, they who most professedly contend against the very notions themselves which directly influence all our practice toward God, so considered, and would suggest such as are wholly inconsistent therewith; who oppose the knowledge of God to the end of that knowledge, and do not merely mistake the way to that end while they are aiming at it, but most avowedly resist and disclaim the end itself; are to be distinguished from them who professedly intend that same end, only see not wherein their misapprehensions are prejudicial and repugnant to it; otherwise are ready to reject them. And the former are therefore most justly to be singled out, and designed the objects of our direct opposition. Nor are they so fitly to be opposed under any other notion, as that of atheists. For since our knowledge of God ought chiefly to respect him in that fore-mentioned relative consideration, and the inquiry, What is God? signifies, as it concerns us, What is the object of religion? they denying any such thing, deny there is a God. Nor do they deny him in that relative consideration only; but (as every relation is founded in somewhat that is absolute) the very reason of their denying him so, is, that they deny in him those absolute and positive perfections that render him such; as certain of those do, that have been proved to belong to him. Which is that we have next to consider, namely,

4. That it may evidently be deduced from what hath been said, tending to prove those things of God which are included in the notion of him, and from that notion itself, that he is such as can converse with men. That is, having proved—That there is an eternal, self-subsisting, independent, necessary Being, of so great activity, life, power, wisdom, and goodness, as to have been the Maker of this world: and by this medium—That we see this world is in being, which otherwise could never have been, much less such as we see it is: it therefore follows, that this great Creator can have influence upon the creatures he hath made, in a way suitable to their natures. It follows, I say, from the same medium, (the present visible

existence of this world, which could not otherwise be now in being,) that he can thus have influence upon his creatures: for it is hence manifest that he hath; they depend on him, and are sustained by him; nor could more subsist by themselves, than they could make themselves, or of themselves have sprung out of nothing. And if it were possible they could, being raised up into being, continue in being of themselves; yet since our present question is not concerning what they need, but what God can do; and our adversaries in the present cause do not (as hath been noted) upon any other pretence deny that he doth concern himself in the affairs of the universe, but that he cannot; (that is, that it consists not with his felicity, and he cannot be happy;) is it not plain that he can with the same facility continue the influence which he at first gave forth, and with as little prejudice to his felicity? For if it be necessary to him to be happy, or impossible not to be so, he must be ever so. His happiness was not capable of being discontinued, so long as while he made the world, settled the several orders and kinds, and formed the first individuals of every kind of creatures. Therefore having done this, and without diminution to his happiness, was it a more toilsome and less tolerable labour to keep things as they were, than to make them so? If it were, (which no man that understands common sense would say,) surely that blind thing which they more blindly call *nature*, (not understanding or being able to tell what they mean by it,) and would have to be the only cause of all things, acting at first to the uttermost, and having no way to recruit its vigour and reinforce itself, its labour and business being so much increased, had jaded and grown weary; had given out, and patiently suffered all things to dissolve and relapse into the old chaos long ago. But if the labour were not greater, to continue things in the state wherein they were made, than to make them; surely a wise, intelligent Deity, which we have proved made them, could as well sustain them, being made, as their brutal (and as unintelligible, as unintelligent) nature do both.

So much then of intercourse God could have with his creatures, as his continual communication of his influence to be received by them amounts to. And then man not being excluded their number, must share in this possible privilege according to the capacity of his nature. And inasmuch as we have also proved more particularly concerning man, that he immediately owes the peculiar excellencies of his intelligent nature, as it is such, to God only; it is apparently consequent,

that having formed this his more excellent creature, according to his own more express likeness, stamped it with the glorious characters of his living image, given it a nature suitable to his own, and thereby made it capable of rational and intelligent converse with him; he hath it ever in his power to maintain a continual converse with this creature, by agreeable communications; by letting in upon it the vital beams and influences of his own light and love, and receiving back the return of its grateful acknowledgments and praises. Wherein it is manifest he should do no greater thing than he hath done: for who sees not, that it is a matter of no greater difficulty to converse with, than to make a reasonable creature? Or who would not be ashamed to deny, that he who hath been the only Author of the soul of man, and of the excellent powers and faculties belonging to it, can more easily sustain what he hath made, and converse with that his creature, suitably to the way wherein he hath made it capable of his converse? Whereto the consideration being added of his gracious nature, (manifested in this creation itself,) it is further evident, that he is (as things are now ordered, whereof more hereafter) not only able, but apt and ready to converse with men, in such a way as shall tend to the improving of their being unto that blessedness whereof he hath made them naturally capable; if their own voluntary alienation and aversion to him (yet not overcome) do not obstruct the way of that intercourse. And even this were sufficient to give foundation to a temple, and both afford encouragement and infer an obligation to religion; although no other perfection had been, or could be, demonstrated of the Divine Being, than what is immediately to be collected from his works, and the things whereof he hath been the sole and most arbitrary Author. For what if no more were possible to be proved, have we not, even by thus much, a representation of an object sufficiently worthy of our homage and adoration? He that could make and sustain such a world as this, how inexpressibly doth he surpass in greatness the most excellent of all mortal creatures! to some or other of whom, upon some (merely accidental) dignifying circumstances, we justly esteem ourselves to owe a dutiful observance and subjection.

If he did not comprehend within his own Being simply all perfection; if there were many gods and worlds besides, and he only the Creator and absolute Lord of our vortex; were not that enough to entitle him to all the obedience and service we

could give him, and to enable him sufficiently to reward it, and render his presence and cherishing influences (which he could every where diffuse within this circle, and limited portion of the universe) even infinitely covetable and desirable to us? Yea, if he were the only entire Author of our own particular being, how much more is that, than the partial, subordinate interest of a human parent, to whom (as even an Epicurean would confess) nature itself urges and exacts a duty, the refusal whereof even barbarian ingenuity would abhor, yea and brutal instinct condemn? How much greater and more absolute is the right which the parentage of our whole being challenges? If every man were created by a several God, whose creative power were confined to only one such creature, and each one were the solitary product and the charge of an appropriate Deity, whose dominion the state of things would allow to be extended so far only, and no further; were there therefore no place left for religion, or no tie unto love, reverence, obedience, and adoration, because the Author of my being comprehended not in himself all perfection, when as yet he comprehended so much as to be the sole cause of all that is in me; and his power over me, and his goodness to me, are hereby supposed the same which the only one God truly hath and exerciseth towards all? If all that I am and have be for him, I cannot surely owe to him less than all.

Such as have either had, or supposed themselves to have, their particular tutelary *genii*, (of whom there will be more occasion to take notice hereafter,) though they reckoned them but a sort of deputed or vicarious deities, underling gods, whom they never accounted the causes of their being; yet how have they coveted and gloried to open their breasts to become their temples, and entertain the converse of those supposed divine inhabitants? If they had taken one of these to be their alone creator, how much greater had their veneration and their homage been? This, it may be hoped, will be thought sufficiently proved in this discourse, (at least to have been so by some or other,) that we are not of ourselves; and that our extraction is to be fetched higher than from matter, or from only human progenitors. Nothing that is terrene and mortal could be the author of such powers as we find in ourselves; we are most certainly the offspring of some or other Deity. And he that made us, knows us thoroughly, can apply himself inwardly to us, receive our addresses and applications, our acknowledgments and adoration; whereunto we should have,

even upon these terms, great and manifest obligation, although nothing more of the excellency and perfection of our Creator were certainly known to us.

III. But it hath been further shewn, That the necessary Being from whence we sprang, is also an absolutely and infinitely perfect Being:—That necessary Being cannot be less perfect, than to include the entire and inexhaustible fulness of all being and perfection:—That therefore the God to whom this notion belongs, must consequently be every way sufficient to all, and be himself but one; the only Source and Fountain of all life and being; the common Basis and Support of the universe; the absolute Lord of this great creation, and the central Object of the common concurrent trust, fear, love, and other worship of his intelligent and reasonable creatures. And therefore there remains no greater or other difficulty, in apprehending how he can, without disturbance to himself or interruption of his own felicity, intend all the concernments of his creatures, apply himself to them according to their several exigencies, satisfy their desires and cravings, inspect and govern their actions and affairs; than we have to apprehend a Being absolutely and every way perfect. Whereof if we cannot have a distinct apprehension all at once, that is, though we cannot comprehend every particular perfection of God in the same thought, (as our eye cannot behold, at one view, every part of an over-large object, unto which, however, part by part, it may be successively applied,) we can yet in the general apprehend him absolutely perfect; or such to whom, we are sure, no perfection is wanting: and can successively contemplate this or that, as we are occasionally led to consider them: and can answer to ourselves difficulties that occur to us, with this easy, sure, and ever ready solution; That he can do all things; that nothing is too hard for him; that he is full, all-sufficient, and every way perfect. Whereof we are the more confirmed, that we find we cannot, by the utmost range of our most enlarged thoughts, ever reach any bound or end of that perfection, which yet we must conclude is necessarily to be attributed to an absolutely perfect Being. And this we have reason to take for a very sufficient answer to any doubt that can arise, concerning the possibility of his converse with us; unless we will be so unreasonable as to pretend, that what is brought for *solution* hath greater difficulty in it than the *doubt;* or that because we cannot apprehend at once infinite perfection, therefore it cannot be; which were as much as to say, that it cannot be because it is infinite; for it were not in-

finite, if we could distinctly apprehend it. And so were to make it a reason against itself, which is most injuriously and with no pretence attempted, except we could shew an inconsistency in the terms; which it is plain we can never do, and should most idly attempt. And it were to make our present apprehension the measure of all reality, against our experience; which (if our indulgence to that self-magnifying conceit do not suspend our farther inquiries and researches) would daily bring to our notice things we had no apprehension of before. It were (instead of that just and laudable ambition of becoming ourselves like God, in his imitable perfections) to make him like ourselves; the true model of the Epicurean deity.

Nor can any thing be more easy, than that wherein we pretend so great a difficulty; that is, to apprehend somewhat may be more perfect than we can apprehend. What else but proud ignorance can hinder us from seeing, that the more we know, the more there is that we know not? How often are we out-done by creatures of our own order in the creation! How many men are there whom we are daily constrained to admire, as unspeakably excelling us, and whom we cannot but acknowledge to be far more knowing, discerning, apprehensive of things, of more composed minds, of more penetrating judgments, of more quick and nimble wits, easily turning themselves to a great variety of objects and affairs without distraction and confusion, of more equal and dispassionate tempers, less liable to commotion and disturbance than ourselves.

How absurd and senseless a pretence is it against the thing itself, that we cannot apprehend an infinite perfection in one common fountain of all perfection; or because we cannot go through a multitude of businesses without distraction, that therefore he that made us and all things cannot. If we would make ourselves the measure, it is likely we should confess we were out-stripped, when we are told that Julius Cæsar could dictate letters, when he was intent upon the greatest affairs, to four (and if he had nothing else to divert him, to seven) secretaries at once; that Cyrus* could call by name all the

* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 7. c. 25. Id. l. 7. c. 24. vid. & Xenoph. de Cyr. Pæd. l. 5. Who, though he expressly says not he knew all the soldiers names, but seems rather to mean it of their officers, (for, saith he, he reckoned it an absurd thing a mechanic should know the names of all his tools, &c. and a general not know the names of his captains under him, &c.) yet he saith the soldiers wondered πῶς ὀνομάζων ἐνετέλλετο—*that he should be able to call them by their names when he gave the word of command.*

soldiers in his numerous army: with divers other strange instances of like nature. And since the perfections of *some* so far exceed the measure of the *most*, Why is it then unconceivable that divine perfection should so far surpass *all*, as that God may intend the affairs of the world, according to the several exigencies of his creatures, without any ungrateful diversion to himself, or diminution to his felicity? And since they who partake of some, and but a small portion of perfection only, can be concerned in many affairs, with little trouble; why cannot he that comprehends all perfection, be concerned in all, without any? For though we have, in what hath been last said, endeavoured to represent it as not so unapprehensible as is pretended, that it may be also; we take it, in the mean time, as formerly sufficiently proved, that so it is; that God is a being absolutely perfect, or that includes eminently all perfection in himself.

III. Which general perfection of his being, as it modifies all his attributes, so we shall particularly take notice that it doth so as to those that have a more direct influence upon, and tend more fully to evince his conversableness with men. As, *First*, his wisdom and knowledge (for we need not to be so curious as at present to distinguish them) must be omniscient. About which, if any place were left for rational doubt, it would be obvious to them to allege it who are of slower inclinations towards religion; and object, (against all applications to, or expectations from him,) that if we be not sure he knows simply all things, so as wisely to consider them and resolve fitly about them, it will be no little difficulty to determine which he doth, and which not; or to be at a certainty, that this or that concernment of theirs, about which they might address themselves to him, be not among the unknown things. At least, we shall the less need to be curious in distinguishing, or to consider what things may be supposed rather than other, to be without the compass of his knowledge; if it appear that it universally encompasses all things, or that nothing can be without its reach. And because we suppose it already out of doubt, that the true notion of God imports a Being absolutely or every way perfect; nothing else can be doubted in this matter, but whether the knowledge of all things be a perfection.

The greatest difficulty that hath troubled some in this matter, hath been, How it is possible there should be any certain knowledge of events yet to come, that depend upon a free and self-determining cause. But methinks we should not make a

difficulty to acknowledge, that to know these things, imports greater perfection than not to know them; and then it would be very unreasonable, because we cannot shew how this or that thing was performed which manifestly is done, therefore to deny that it is done at all. It would be so highly unreasonable to conclude against any act of God, from our ignorance of the manner of it, that we should reckon it very absurd to conclude so, concerning any act of our own, or our ability thereto. What if it were hitherto an unknown thing, and impossible to be determined, how the act of vision is performed by us; were it a wise conclusion, that therefore we neither do nor can see? How much more rash and presuming a confidence were it to reason thus concerning the Divine acts and perfections! Would we not in any such case be determined rather by that which is more evident, than by what is more obscure? As in the assigned instance, we should have but these two propositions to compare—That I do (or have such a perfection belonging to me that I can) see, and,—That whatsoever act I do or can do, I am able to understand the course and method of nature's operations therein—and thereupon to judge which of these two is more evident. Wherein it may be supposed there is no man in his wits, to whom the determination would not be easy. Accordingly, in the present case we have only these two assertions that can be in competition, in point of evidence, between which we are to make a comparison, and a consequent judgment; namely—Whatsoever perfection belongs to a Being absolutely perfect, enabling it to do this or that, the wit of man can comprehend the distinct way and manner of doing it; and,—It imports greater perfection to know all things, than to be ignorant of some—and here surely whosoever shall think the determination difficult, accounts the wit of man so exceeding great, that he discovers his own to be very little. For what can the pretence of evidence be in the former assertion? Was it necessary that he, in whose choice it was whether we should ever know any thing or no, should make us capable of knowing every thing belonging to his own being? Or will we adventure to be so assuming, as while we deny it to God that he knows all things, to attribute to ourselves that we do? But if we will think it not altogether unworthy of us to be ignorant of something, what is there of which we may with more probability, or with less disparagement be thought so, than the manner of God's knowing things? And what place is there for complaint of inevidence in the latter? Is not that knowledge more perfect, which so fully already comprehends

all things, as upon that account to admit of no increase; than that which shall be every day growing, and have a continual succession of new objects emerging and coming into view before altogether unknown? And will not that be the case, if we suppose future contingencies to lie concealed from the penetrating eye of God? For whatsoever is future, will some time be present, and then we will allow such contingencies to be known to him. That is, that God may know them, when we ourselves can; and that nothing of that kind is known to him, which is not knowable some way or other to ourselves, at least successively, and one thing after another. We will perhaps allow *that* prerogative to God, in point of this knowledge, that *he* can know these things now fallen out, all at once; *we*, but by degrees; while yet there is not any one that is absolutely unknowable to us. But why should it be thought unreasonable, to attribute an excellency to the knowledge of God above ours; as well in respect of the manner of knowing, as the multitude of objects at once known? We will readily confess, in some creatures, an excellency of their visive faculty above our own; that they can see things in that darkness, wherein they are to us invisible. And will we not allow that to the eye of God, which is *as a flame of fire*, to be able to penetrate into the abstrusest darkness of futurity, though we know not the way how it is done; when yet we know that whatsoever belongs to the most perfect being, must belong to his? And that knowledge of all things imports more perfection, than if it were lessened by the ignorance of any thing.

Some, who have thought the certain foreknowledge of future contingencies not attributable to God, have reckoned the matter sufficiently excused by *this*, That it no more detracts from the divine omniscience, to state without the object of it things not possible, or that imply a contradiction (as they suppose these do) to be known; than it doth from his omnipotency, that it cannot do what is impossible, or that implies a contradiction to be done. But against this there seems to lie this reasonable exception, that the two cases appear not sufficiently alike; inasmuch as the supposition of the former will be found not to leave the blessed God equally entitled to omniscience, as the latter to omnipotency. For all things should not be alike the object of both; and why should not *that* be understood to signify the *knowledge* of simply all things, as well as *this* the *power of doing* simply all things? Or why should *all things*, included in these two words, signify so very diversely;

that is, *there* properly all things, *here* some things only? And why must we so difference the object of omnisciency and omnipotency, as to make that so much narrower than this? And then how is it all things, when so great a number of things will be left excluded? Whereas from the object of omnipotency (that we may prevent what would be replyed) there will be no exclusion of any thing: not of the things which are actually already made; for they are still momently reproduced by the same power: not of the actions and effects of free causes yet future; for, when they become actual, God doth certainly perform the part of the first cause, (even by common consent,) in order to their becoming so; which is certainly doing somewhat, though all be not agreed what that part is. Therefore they are, in the mean time, to be esteemed within the object of omnipotency, or to be of the things which God can do; namely, as the first cause virtually including the power of the second. But more strictly; all impossibility is either natural and absolute, or moral and conditional. What is absolutely or naturally impossible, or repugnant in itself, is not properly any thing. Whatsoever simple being, not yet existent, we can form any conception of, is producible, and so within the compass of omnipotency; for there is no repugnancy in simplicity. That wherein therefore we place natural impossibility, is the inconsistency of being this thing, whose notion is such; and another, wholly and entirely, whose notion is diverse, at the same time, that which (more barbarously than insignificantly) hath been wont to be called *incompossibility*. But surely all things are properly enough said to be naturally possible to God, while all simple beings are producible by him, of which any notion can be formed; yea and compounded, so as by their composition to result into a third thing. So that it is not an exception, to say that it is naturally impossible this thing should be another thing, and yet be wholly itself still at once; that it should be and not be, or be without itself. There is not within the compass of actual or conceivable being, such a thing. Nor is it reasonable to except such actions as are naturally possible to other agents, but not to him; as to walk, for instance, or the like. Inasmuch as, though the excellency of his nature permits not they should be done by him, yet since their power of doing them proceeds wholly from him, he hath it virtually and eminently in himself: as was formerly said of the infiniteness of his being. And for moral impossibility, as to lie, to do an unjust act; that God never does them, proceeds not from want of power, but an eternal aver-

sion of will. It cannot be said he is not able to do such a thing, if he would; but so is his will qualified and conditioned, by its own unchangeable rectitude, that he most certainly never will; or such things as are in themselves evil are never done by him, not through the defect of natural power, but from the permanent stability and fulness of all moral perfection. And it is not without the compass of absolute omnipotency to do what is but conditionally impossible, that absence of which restrictive condition would rather bespeak impotency and imperfection, than omnipotency. Therefore the object of omnipotence is simply all things; why not of omniscience as well? It may be said, all things, as it signifies the object of omniscience, is only restrained by the act or faculty, signified therewith in the same word, so as to denote the formal object of that faculty or act, namely, all knowable things. But surely that act must suppose some agent, whereto that knowable hath reference. Knowable! To whom? To others or to God himself? If we say the former, it is indeed a great honour we put upon God, to say he can know as much as others; if the latter, we speak absurdly, and only say he can know all that he can know. It were fairer to deny omniscience than so interpret it. But if it be denied, what shall the pretence be? Why, that it implies a contradiction future contingents should be certainly known; for they are uncertain, and nothing can be otherwise truly known than as it is. *

And it must be acknowledged, that to whom any thing is uncertain, it is a contradiction that to him it should be certainly known. But that such things are uncertain to God, needs other proof than I have met with, in what follows in that cited author, or elsewhere: all which will amount to no more than this, that such things as we cannot tell how God knows them, must needs be unknown to him. But since we are sure many such things have been certainly foretold by God, (and of them such as we may be also sure he never intended to effect,) we have reason enough to be confident that such things are not

* Qualis res est talis est rei cognitio. Si itaque res sit incerta (puta incertum est hoc ne sit futurum, an non) non datur ulla certa ejus notitia. Quomodo enim fieri potest ut certo sciatur adfore, quod certo futurum non est, &c.—As a thing is, such is the knowledge of that thing; if a thing be uncertain, (uncertain whether it will come to pass or not,) there is no certain knowledge of that thing: for how can it be certainly known that a thing will be, which, whether it will be or not, is uncertain? *Strangius de voluntate & Actionibus Dei, &c. l. 3. c. 6. as he there objects to himself.*

unknowable to him. And for the manner of his knowing them, it is better to profess ignorance about it, than attempt the explication thereof, either unintelligibly, as some have to *no purpose*, or dangerously and impiously, as others have adventured to do to very *bad purpose*. And it well becomes us to suppose an infinite understanding may have ways of knowing things which we know nothing of. To my apprehension, that last-mentioned author doth with ill success attempt an explication of God's manner of knowing this sort of things, by the far less intelligible notion of the indivisibility of eternity, comprehending (as he says) all the parts of time, not successively, but together. And though he truly says that the Scotists' way of expressing how future contingents are present to God, that is, according to their objective and intentional being only, affords us no account why God knows them, (for which cause he rejects it, and follows that of the Thomists, who will have them to be present according to their real and actual existence, I should yet prefer the deficiency of the former way, before the contradictiousness and repugnancy of the latter; and conceive these words in the *Divine Dialogues*, (Dr. More,) as good an explication of the manner of his knowledge, as the case can admit, (which yet is but the Scotists' sense,) "That the whole evolution of times and ages is so collectedly and presentificly represented to God at once, as if all things and actions which ever were, are, or shall be, were at this very instant, and so always really present and existent before him." Which is no wonder, the animadversion and intellectual comprehension of God being absolutely infinite, according to the truth of his idea. I do therefore think *that* a sober resolution in this matter, (of Bathymus, in the same *Dialogues*,) "That it seems more safe to allow this privilege to the infinite understanding of God, than to venture at all to circumscribe his omniscience: for though it may safely be said that he knows not any thing that really implies a contradiction to be known, yet we are not assured but that may seem a contradiction to us, that is not so really in itself." And when we have only human wit to contest with in the case, reverence of this or that man, though both in great vogue in that kind, needs not restrain us from distinguishing between a mere seeming latent contradiction, and a flat, downright, open one. Only as to that instance of the commensurableness of the diagonal line of a quadrate to one of the sides; whereas though there are great difficulties on both sides, namely, that these are commensurable, and that they are not; yet any man's judgment would rather incline to

the latter, as the easier part: I should therefore also think it more safe to make choice of that, as the parallel of the present difficulty. Upon the whole, we may conclude that the knowledge of God is every way perfect; and being so, extends to all our concernments: and that nothing remains, upon that account, to make us decline applying ourselves to religious converses with him, or to deny him the honour and entertainment of a temple: for which we shall yet see further cause, when we consider,

Secondly, That his power is also omnipotent. Which (though the discourse of it have been occasionally somewhat mingled with that of the last) might be directly spoken of for the fuller eviction of that his conversableness with men, which religion and a temple do suppose. Nor indeed is it enough that he knows our concernments, except he can also provide effectually about them, and dispose of them to our advantage. And we cannot doubt but he, who could create us and such a world as this, can do so, even though he were supposed not omnipotent. But even that itself seems a very unreasonable supposition, that less than infinite power should suffice to the creation of any thing. For however liable it may be to controversy, what a second cause might do herein, being assisted by the infinite power of the first; it seems altogether unimaginable to us, how, though the power of all men were met in one, (which we can easily suppose to be a very vast power,) it could, alone, be sufficient to make the minutest atom arise into being out of nothing. And that all the matter of the universe hath been so produced, namely, out of nothing, it will be no great presumption to suppose already fully proved; in that though any such thing as necessary matter were admitted, yet its essential unalterableness would render it impossible it should be the matter of the universe. Therefore when we cannot devise what finite power can ever suffice (suppose we it ever so much increased, but still finite) to the doing of that which we are sure is done, what is left us to suppose, but that the power which did it is simply infinite: much more when we consider, not only that something is actually produced out of nothing, but do also seriously contemplate the nature of the production! Which carries so much of amazing wonder in it, every where, that even the least and most minute things might serve for sufficient instances of the unlimited greatness of that power which made them; as would be seen, if we did industriously set ourselves to compare the effects of *divine power* with those of *human art* and skill. As is the ingenious and pious observation

of the most worthy Mr. Hook, (in his *Micrographia*,) who upon his viewing with his microscope the point of a small and very sharp needle, (than which we cannot conceive a smaller thing laboured by the hand of man,) takes notice of sundry sorts of natural things, "that have points many thousand times sharper: those of the hairs of insects, &c. *that* appearing broad, irregular, and uneven, having marks upon it, of the rudeness and bungling of art. So unaccurate (saith he) it is in all its productions, even in those that seem most neat, that if examined truly with an organ more acute than that by which they were made, the more we see of their shape the less appearance will there be of their beauty. Whereas in the works of nature the deepest discoveries shew us the greatest excellencies: an evident argument that he that was the Author of these things, was no other than omnipotent, being able to include as great a variety of parts, in the yet smallest discernable point, as in the vaster bodies, (which comparatively are called also points,) such as the earth, sun, or planets." And I may add, when those appear but points, in comparison of his so much vaster work, how plainly doth that also argue to us the same thing? And let us strictly consider the matter. Omnipotency, as hath been said, imports a power of doing all things possible to be done, or indeed, simply all things; unto which passive power, an active one must necessarily correspond. That is, there is nothing in itself possible to be done, but it is also possible to some one or other to do it. If we should therefore suppose God not omnipotent, it would follow some one or other were able to do more than God. For though possibility do import a non-repugnancy in the thing to be done; yet it also connotes an ability in some agent to do it. Wherefore there is nothing possible which some agent cannot do. And if so, that agent must either be God, or some other. To say it is God, is what we intend. That is, there is nothing possible which God cannot do; or he can do all things. But to say it is some other, and not God, were to open the door to the above-mentioned horrid consequence; which no one that acknowledges a God (and we are not now discoursing with them who simply deny his being) would not both blush and tremble to avow.

Some indeed have so over-done the business here as to deny any intrinsical possibility of any thing, and say that things are only said to be possible, because God can do them; which is the same thing as thus to explain God's omnipotency; that is, that he can do all things which he can do: and makes a *chimæra* no more impossible in itself to be produced, than a

not yet existent man. And the reason of the denial is, that what is only possible is nothing, and therefore can have nothing intrinsical to it; s if it were not sufficient to the intrinsical possibility of a thing, that its idea have no repugnancy in it. Yet entire and full possibility connotes a reference to the productive power of an agent; so that it is equally absurd to say that things are only possible, because there is no repugnancy in their ideas, as it is to say they are only possible, because some agent can do them; inasmuch as the entire possibility of their existence imports both that there is no repugnancy in their ideas, which if there be, they are every way nothing, (as hath been said before,) and also that there is a sufficient power to produce them. Therefore, whereas we might believe him sufficient every way for us, though we did not believe him simply omnipotent; how much more fully are we assured, when we consider that he is? Whereof also no place of doubt can remain, this being a most unquestionable perfection, necessarily included in the notion of an absolutely perfect Being. But here we need not further insist, having no peculiar adversary (in this matter singly) to contend with, as indeed he would have had a hard province, who should have undertaken to contend against omnipotency. And now join herewith again,

Thirdly, The boundlessness of his goodness, which upon the same ground of his absolute perfection, must be infinite also, and which it is of equal concernment to us to consider, that we may understand he not only can effectually provide about our concernments, but is most graciously inclined so to do. And then, what rational inducement is wanting to religion, and the dedication of a temple; if we consider the joint encouragement that arises from so unlimited power and goodness? Or what man would not become entirely devoted to him, who, by the one of these, we are assured, Δυναμένῳ μὲν πάντα βουλομένῳ δὲ τὰ ἄριστα. Phil. Jud. de Abr. *can do all things*, and by the other, *will do what is best*. Nor therefore is there any thing immediately needful to our present purpose, the eviction of *God's conversableness with men*, more than hath been already said. That is, there is nothing else to be thought on, that hath any nearer influence thereon; the things that can be supposed to have such influence, being none else than his power, knowledge, and goodness, which have been particularly evinced from the creation of the world, both to have been in some former subject, and to have all originally met in a necessary being, that alone could be the Creator of it. Which

necessary Being, as it is such, appearing also to be infinite, and absolutely perfect; the influence of these cannot but the more abundantly appear to be such as can and may most sufficiently and fully correspond, both in general to the several exigencies of all creatures, and more especially to all the real necessities and reasonable desires of man: so that our main purpose seems already gained. Yet because it may be grateful when we are persuaded that things are so, to fortify (as much as we can) that persuasion, and because our persuasion concerning these attributes of God will be still liable to assault unless we acknowledge him every where present; (nor can it well be conceivable otherwise, how the influence of his knowledge, power, and goodness, can be so universal, as will be thought necessary to infer a universal obligation to religion;) it will be therefore requisite to add,

Fourthly, Somewhat concerning his omnipresence, or because some, that love to be very strictly critical, will be apt to think that term restrictive of his presence to the universe, (as supposing to be present is relative to somewhat one may be said present unto, whereas they will say without the universe, is nothing,) we will rather choose to call it *immensity*. For though it would sufficiently answer our purpose, that his presence be universal to all his creatures; yet even this is to be proved by such arguments as will conclude him simply immense; which therefore will with the greater advantage infer the thing we intend. This part of divine perfection we will acknowledge to have been impugned, by some that have professed much devotedness to a Deity and religion: we will therefore charitably suppose that opposition to have joined with inadvertency of the ill tendency of it; that is, how unwarrantably it would maim the notion of the former, and shake the foundations of the latter. Nor therefore ought that charity to be any allay to a just zeal for so great concerns.

It seems then manifestly repugnant to the notion of an infinitely perfect Being, to suppose it less than simply immense. For, upon that supposition it must either be limited to some certain place, or excluded out of all. The latter of these would be most openly to deny it; as hath with irrefragable evidence been abundantly manifested by the most learned Dr. More, (both in his *Dialogues* and *Enchiridion Metaphys.*) whereto it would be needless and vain to attempt to add any thing. Nor is that the thing pretended to by the sort of persons I now chiefly intend.

And for the *former*, I would inquire, Is amplitude of es-

sence no perfection? Or were the confining of this Being to the very minutest space we can imagine, no detraction from the perfection of it? What if the amplitude of that glorious and ever-blessed Essence were said to be only of that extent (may it be spoken with all reverence, and resentment of the unhappy necessity we have of making so mean a supposition) as to have been confined unto that one temple to which of old he chose to confine his more solemn worship; that he could be essentially present, only here at once, and nowhere else; were this no detraction? They that think him only to replenish and be present by his essence in the highest heaven, (as some are wont to speak,) would they not confess it were a meaner and much lower thought to suppose that presence circumscribed within the so unconceivably narrower limits as the walls of a house? If they should pretend to ascribe to him some perfection beyond this, by supposing his essential presence commensurable to the vaster territory of the highest heavens; even by the same supposition, they should deny to him greater perfection than they ascribe. For the perfection which in this kind they would *ascribe*, were *finite* only; but that which they would *deny*, were *infinite*.

Again, they will however acknowledge omnipotency a perfection included in the notion of an absolutely perfect Being; therefore they will grant, he can create another world (for they do not pretend to believe this infinite; and if they did, by their supposition, they would give away their cause) at any the greatest distance we can conceive from this; therefore so far his power can extend itself. But what, his power without his being? What then is his power? Something, or nothing? Nothing can do nothing; therefore not make a world. It is then some being, and whose being is it but his own? Is it a created being? That is to suppose him first, impotent, and then to have created omnipotency, when he could do nothing. Whence by the way we may see to how little purpose that distinction can be applied in the present case of essential and virtual contact, where the essence and virtue cannot but be the same. But shall it be said, he must, in order to the creating such another world, locally move thither where he designs it? I ask then, But can he not at the same time create thousands of worlds at any distance from this round about it? No man can imagine this to be impossible to him that can do all things. Wherefore of such extent is his power, and consequently his being. Will they therefore say he can immensely, if he please, diffuse his being, but he voluntarily

contracts it? It is answered, that is altogether impossible to a being, that is whatsoever it is by a simple and absolute necessity, for whatsoever it is necessarily, it is unalterably and eternally, or is pure act, and in a possibility to be nothing which it already is not. Therefore since God can every way exert his power, he is necessarily, already, every where: and hence, God's immensity is the true reason of his immobility; there being no imaginable space, which he doth not necessarily replenish. Whence also, the supposition of his being so confined (as was said) is immediately repugnant to the notion of a necessary Being, as well as of an absolutely perfect, which hath been argued from it. We might moreover add, that upon the same supposition God might truly be said to have made a creature greater than himself, (for such this universe apparently were,) and that he can make one (as they must confess who deny him not to be omnipotent) most unconceivably greater than this universe now is. Nothing therefore seems more manifest than that God is immense, or (as we may express it) *extrinsically* infinite, with respect to place; as well as *intrinsically*, in respect to the plenitude of his being and perfection. Only it may be requisite to consider briefly what is said against it by the otherwise minded, that pretend not to deny his infinity in that other sense. Wherein that this discourse swell not beyond just bounds, their strength, namely, of argument, (for it will not be so seasonable here to discuss with them the texts of scripture wont to be insisted on in this matter,) shall be viewed as it is collected and gathered up in one of them.

IV. And that shall be, Curcellæus,* who gives it as succinctly and fully as any I have met with of that sort of men. The *doctrine* itself we may take from him thus. On the negative part, by way of denial of what we have been hitherto asserting, he says, "The foundation," (that is, of a distinction of Maresius's to which he is relying, for so occasionally comes in the discourse,) "namely, the infinity of the divine essence, is not so firm as is commonly thought." And that therefore it may be thought less firm, he thinks fit to cast a slur upon it, by making it the doctrine of the Stoics, exprest by Virgil, *Jovis omnia plena—all things are full of Jupiter;* (as if it must needs be false, because Virgil said it, though I could tell, if it were worth the while, where Virgil speaks more agreeably to his sense than ours, according to which he might as well have interpreted this passage, as divers texts of

* De Vocibus Trinit. &c.

scripture; and then his authority might have been of some value;) and by Lucan, who helps, it seems, to disgrace and spoil it; *Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris*—*Jupiter is, whatever you see and wherever you go.* He might, if he had a mind to make it thought Paganish, have quoted a good many more, but then there might have been some danger it should pass for a common notion. Next, he quotes some passages of the Fathers that import dislike of it, about which we need not concern ourselves; for the question is not what this or that man thought. And then, for the positive account of his own judgment in the case, having cited divers texts out of the Bible that seemed as he apprehended to make against him, he would have us believe, that these all speak rather of God's providence and power by which he concerns himself in all our works, words, and thoughts, whersoever we live, than of the absolute infinity of his essence. And afterwards, * That God is by his essence in the supreme heaven, where he inhabits the inaccessible light, but thence he sends out for himself a spirit, or a certain force, whither he pleases, by which he is truly present, and works there.

But we proceed to his *reasons*, which he saith are not to be contemned. We shall therefore not contemn them so far, as not to take notice of them; which trouble also the reader may please to be at, and afterward do as he think fit.

First, That no difference can be conceived between God and creatures, if God, as they commonly speak, be wholly, in every point, or do fill all the points of the universe with his whole essence: for so whatsoever at all is, will be God himself.

Answ. And that is most marvellous, that the in-being of one thing in another must needs take away all their difference, and confound them each with other; which sure would much rather argue them distinct. For certainly it cannot, without

* *Unto which purpose speaks at large Volkelius de vera Relig.* Quia enim Dei & potentia & sapientia ad res omnes extenditur, uti & potestas sive imperium; ideo ubique præsens, omniaque numine suo complere dicitur, &c.—Because the power and wisdom of God extend to all things, as also his authority or dominion; therefore he is said to be everywhere present, and to fill all things with his divinity. *l.* 1. *c.* 27. *Slichtingius Artic. de filio Dei. Ad Ps.* 139. 6, 7. Nec loquitur David de spiritu sancto, qui peculiaris quidem Dei spiritus est, sed de spiritu Dei simpliciter. Nec dicit spiritum istum ubique *re esse* sed tantum docet nullum esse locum, ad quem is nequeat pertingere, &c.—Nor does David speak of the Holy Spirit, but of the Spirit of God simply. Nor does he say that that Spirit is really everywhere, but only informs us there is no place to which it cannot extend. *So also F. Socin. Smalcius. And (though not altogether so expressly as the rest) Vorstius, Crellius, &c.*

great impropriety, be said that any thing is in itself; and is both the container and contained. How were these thoughts in his mind? And these very notions which he opposes to each other, so as not to be confounded with his mind, and consequently with one another? So that it is a great wonder he was not of both opinions at once. And how did he think his soul to be in his body, which, though substantially united with it, (and that is somewhat more, as we will suppose he knew was commonly held, that to be intimately present,) was not yet the same thing? However, himself acknowledges the power and providence of God to be every where: and then at least every thing must, it seems, be the very power and providence of God. But he thought, it may be, only of confuting the words of Lucan, and chastising his poetic liberty. And if he would have been at the pains to turn all their strains and raptures into propositions, and so have gravely fallen to confuting them, he might perhaps have found as proper an exercise for his logic as this. As for his talk of *a whole*, whereof we acknowledge *no parts*, (as if he imagined the divine essence to be compounded of such, he should have said so, and have proved it,) it is an absurd scheme of speech, which may be left to him, and them that use it, to make their best of.

Secondly, No Idolatry can be committed, if there be not the least point to be found, that is not wholly full of whole God: for whithersoever worship shall be directed, it shall be directed to God himself, who will be no less there than in heaven.

Answ. This proceeds upon the supposition that the former would be granted as soon as it should be heard, as a self-evident principle, that whatsoever is in another, is that in which it is; and so his consequence were most undeniable. But though we acknowledge God to be in every thing, yet so to worship him in any thing, as if his essential presence were confined thereto, while it ought to be conceived of as immense, this is idolatry: and therefore they who so conceive of it, as confined, (or tied in any respect, wherein he hath not so tied it himself,) are concerned to beware of running upon this rock.

Thirdly, Nor can the opinion of fanatics be solidly refuted, who call themselves spiritual, when they determine God to be all in all; to do not only good but evil things, because he is to be accounted to be essentially in all the atoms of the world, in whole; and as a common soul, by which all the parts of the universe do act.

Answ. We may in time make trial whether they can be refuted or no, or whether any solid ground will be left for it; at this time it will suffice to say, that though he be present every

where as a necessary Being, yet he acts as a free cause, and according as his wisdom, his good pleasure, his holiness and justice do guide his action.

Fourthly, So God will be equally present with the wicked, and with the holy and godly, with the damned in hell, and devils, as with the blessed in heaven, or Christ himself.

Answ. So he will, in respect of his essential presence. How he is otherwise (distinguishingly enough) present in his temple, we shall have occasion hereafter to shew.

Fifthly, That I say not how shameful it is to think, that the most pure and holy God should be as much in the most nasty places as in heaven, &c. (I forbear to recite the rest of this uncleanly argument, which is strong in nothing but ill savour.) But for

Answ. How strange a notion was this of holiness, by which it is set in opposition to corporeal filthiness! As if a holy man should lose or very much blemish his sanctity, by a casual fall into a puddle. Indeed, if *sense* must give us measures of God, and every thing must be reckoned an offence to him that is so to it, we shall soon frame to ourselves a God altogether such a one as ourselves. The Epicureans themselves would have been ashamed to reason or conceive thus of God, who tell us the Divine Being is as little capable of receiving a stroke, as the inane; and surely (in proportion) of any sensible offence. We might as well suppose him in danger, as Dr. More (in his *Dialogues*) fitly expresses it, to be hurt with a thorn, as offended with an ill smell.

We have then enough to assure us of God's absolute immensity and omnipresence, and nothing of that value against it as ought to shake our belief herein.. And surely the consideration of this, added to the other of his perfections, (and which tends so directly to facilitate and strengthen our persuasion concerning the rest,) may render us assuredly certain, that we shall find him a conversable Being; if we seriously apply ourselves to converse with him, and will but allow him the liberty of that temple within us, whereof we are hereafter (with his leave and help) to treat more distinctly and at large.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE

LIVING TEMPLE.

PART II.

CONTAINING

ANIMADVERSIONS ON SPINOSA,

AND

A FRENCH WRITER

PRETENDING TO CONFUTE HIM.

WITH

A RECAPITULATION OF THE FORMER PART,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE DESTITUTION AND RESTITUTION OF GOD'S TEMPLE AMONG MEN.

A

PREFACE,

Shewing the inducement and general contents of this Second Part. The occasion of considering Spinosa, and a French writer who pretends to confute him. A specimen of the way and strength of the former's reasoning, as an introduction to a more distinct examination of such of his positions, as the design of this discourse was more directly concerned in.

IT is not worth the while to trouble the reader with an account why the progress of this work (begun many years ago, in a former Part) hath been so long delayed; or why it is now resumed. There are cases wherein things too little for public notice, may be sufficient reasons to one's self: and such self-satisfaction is all that can be requisite, in a matter of no more importance than that circumstance only, of the time of sending abroad a discourse, of such a nature and subject, as that if it can be useful at any time, will be so at all times. The business of the present discourse, is religion; which is not the concern of an age only, or of this or that time, but of all times; and which, in respect of its grounds and basis, is eternal, and can never cease or vary. But if in its use and exercise it do at any time more visibly languish, by attempts against its foundations, an endeavour to establish them, if it be not altogether unfit to serve that purpose, will not be liable to be blamed as unseasonable. Every one will understand, that a design further to establish the grounds of religion, can have no other meaning, than only to represent their stability unshaken by any attempts upon them; that being all that is either possible in this case, or needful. Nothing more is possible: for if there be not already, in the nature of things, a sufficient foundation of religion, it is now too late; for their course and order cannot begin again. Nor is any thing, besides such a representation, needful: for have the adventures of daring wits (as they are fond of being thought) altered the nature of things? Or hath their mere breath thrown the world off from its ancient basis, and new-moulded the universe, so as to make things be after the way of their own hearts? Or have they prevailed upon themselves, firmly to believe things are as they would wish?

One would be ashamed to be of that sort of creature, called *Man*, and count it an unsufferable reproach to be long unresolved, Whether there

ought to be such a thing in the world as religion, yea, or no. What ever came on it, or whatsoever I did or did not besides, I would drive this business to an issue; I would never endure to be long in suspense about so weighty and important a question. But if I inclined to the negative, I would rest in nothing short of the plainest demonstration: for I am to dispute against mankind; and eternity hangs upon it. If I misjudge, I run counter to the common sentiments of all the world, and I am lost for ever. The opposers of it have nothing but inclination to oppose to it, with a bold jest now and then. But if I consider the unrefuted demonstrations brought for it, with the consequences, religion is the last thing in all the world upon which I would adventure to break a jest. And I would ask such as have attempted to argue against it, Have their strongest arguments conquered their fear? Have they no suspicion left, that the other side of the question may prove true? They have done all they can, by often repeating their faint despairing wishes, and the mutterings of their hearts, "No God! no God!" to make themselves believe there is none; when yet the restless tossings to and fro of their uneasy minds; their tasking and torturing that little residue of wit and common sense, which their riot hath left them, (the excess of which latter, as well shews as causes the defect of the former,) to try every new method and scheme of atheism they hear of, implies their distrust of all; and their suspicion, that do what they can, things will still be as they were, that is, most adverse and unfavourable to that way of living, which however at a venture, they had before resolved on. Therefore, they find it necessary to continue their contrivances, how more effectually to disburden themselves of any obligation to be religious; and hope, at least, some or other great wit may reach further than their own; and that either by some new model of thoughts, or by not thinking, it may be possible at length to argue or wink the Deity into nothing, and all religion out of the world.

And we are really to do the age that right, as to acknowledge, the genius of it aims at more consistency and agreement with itself, and more cleverly to reconcile notions with common practice, than heretofore. Men seem to be grown weary of the old dull way of practising all manner of lewdnesses, and pretending to repent of them; to sin, and say they are sorry for it. The running this long-beaten circular tract of doing and repenting the same things, looks ridiculously, and they begin to be ashamed of it. A less interrupted and more progressive course in their licentious ways, looks braver; and they count it more plausible to disbelieve this world to have any ruler at all, than to suppose it to have such a one as they can cheat and mock with so easy and ludicrous a repentance, or reconcile to their wickedness, only by calling themselves wicked, while they still mean to continue so. And perhaps of any other repentance they have not heard much; or if they have, they count it a more heroical, or feel it an easier thing to laugh away the fear of any future account or punishment, than to endure the severities of a serious repentance, and a regular life. Nor can they, however, think the torments of any hell so little tolerable as those of a sober and pious life upon earth. And for their happening to prove everlasting, they think they may run the hazard of that. For as they can make a sufficient shift to secure themselves from the latter sort of torments, so they believe the champions of their cause have taken sufficient care to secure them from the former.

As religion hath its gospel and evangelists, so hath atheism and irreligion too. There are tidings of peace sent to such as shall repent and turn to God: and there have been those appointed, whose business it should be to publish and expound them to the world. This also is the method for carrying on the design of irreligion. Doctrines are invented to make men fearless, and believe they need no repentance. And some have taken the part to assert and defend such doctrines, to evangelize the world, and cry "peace, peace," to men, upon these horrid terms. And these undertake for the common herd, encourage them to indulge themselves all manner of liberty, while they watch for them, and guard the coasts: and no faith was ever more implicit or resigned, than the infidelity and disbelief of the more unthinking sort of these men. They reckon it is not every one's part to think. It is enough for the most to be boldly wicked, and credit their common cause, by an open contempt of God and religion. The other warrant them safe, and confidently tell them they may securely disbelieve all that ever hath been said, to make a religious regular life be thought necessary; as only invented frauds of sour and ill-natured men, that envy to mankind the felicity whereof their nature hath made them capable, and which their own odd preternatural humour makes them neglect and censure.

And for these defenders of the atheistical cause, it being their part and province to cut off the aids of reason from religion, to make it seem an irrational and a ridiculous thing, and to warrant and justify the disuse and contempt of it, and as it were, to cover the siege, wherewith the common rout have begirt the temple of God; they have had less leisure themselves, to debauch and wallow in more grossly sensual impurities. Herewith the thinking part did less agree: and they might perhaps count it a greater thing to make debauchees than to be such, and reckon it was glory enough to them to head and lead on the numerous throng, and pleasure enough to see them they had so thoroughly disciplined to the service, throw dirt and squibs at the sacred pile, the dwelling of God among men on earth, and cry, "Down with it even to the ground." Nor for this sort of men, whose business was only to be done by noise and clamour, or by jest and laughter, we could think them no more fit to be discoursed with than a whirlwind, or an *ignis fatuus*. But for such as have assumed to themselves the confidence to pretend to reason, it was not fit they should have cause to think themselves neglected. Considering, therefore, that if the existence of a Deity were fully proved, (that is, such as must be the fit object of religion, or of the honour of a temple,) all the little cavils against it must signify nothing, (because the same thing cannot be both true and false,) we have in the former part of this discourse, endeavoured to assert so much in an argumentative way. And therefore first laid down such a notion of God, as even atheists themselves, while they deny him to exist, cannot but grant to be the true notion of the thing they deny; namely, summarily, that he can be no other than a being absolutely perfect. And thereupon next proceeded to evince the existence of such a being. And whereas this might have been attempted in another method, as was noted *Part* 1. *Ch.* 1. by concluding the existence of such a being first from the idea of it, which (as a fundamental perfection) involves existence; yea, and necessity of existence, most apparently in it. Because that was clamoured at as sophistical and captious,

(though very firm unsliding steps might, with caution, be taken in that way,*) yet we rather chose the other as plainer, more upon the square, more easily intelligible and convictive, and less liable to exception in any kind; that is, rather to begin at the bottom, and rise from necessity of existence, to absolute perfection, than to begin at the top, and prove downward, from absolute perfection, necessity of existence.

Now, if it do appear from what hath been said concerning the nature of necessary, self-existing being, that it cannot but be absolutely perfect, even as it is such, since nothing is more evident than that some being or other doth exist necessarily, or of itself, our point is gained without more ado: that is, we have an object of religion, or one to whom a temple duly belongs. We thereupon used some endeavour to make that good, and secure that more compendious way to our end; as may be seen in the former Part. Which was endeavoured as it was a nearer and more expeditious course; not that the main cause of religion did depend upon the immediate and self-evident reciprocal connexion of the terms, *necessary existence*, and *absolute perfection*, as we shall see hereafter in the following discourse: but because there are other hypotheses, that proceed either upon the denial of any necessary being that is absolutely perfect, or upon the assertion of some necessary being that is not absolutely perfect; it hence appears requisite, to undertake the examination of what is said to either of these purposes, and to shew with how little pretence a necessary most perfect being is denied, or any such imperfect necessary being, is either asserted or imagined.

We shall therefore in this Second Part, First, take into consideration what is (with equal absurdity and impiety) asserted by one author, of the identity of all substance, of the impossibility of one substance being produced by another, and consequently of one necessary self-existing being, pretended with gross self-repugnancy, to be endued with infinite perfections, but really represented the common receptacle of all imaginable imperfection and confusion.—Next, what is asserted by another in avowed opposition to him, of a necessary self-existent being, that is at the same time said to be essentially imperfect.—Then we shall recapitulate what had been discoursed in the former Part, for proof of such a necessarily existent and absolutely perfect being, as is there asserted.—Thence we shall proceed to shew how reasonably scripture testimony is to be relied upon, in reference to some things concerning God, and the religion of his temple, which either are not so clearly demonstrable, or not at all discoverable the rational way.—And shall lastly shew how it hath come to pass, if God be such as he hath been represented, so capable of a temple with man, so apt and inclined to inhabit such a one, that he should ever not do so; or how such a temple should ever cease, or be uninhabited and desolate, that the known way of its restitution may be the more regardable and marvellous in our eyes.

The authors against whom we are to be concerned, are Benedictus Spinosa, a Jew, and an anonymous French writer, who pretends to confute him. And the better to prepare our way, we shall go on to preface something concerning the former, namely, Spinosa, whose scheme, (as it is laid down in his

* As by the excellent Dr. Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*, we find it done.

Posthumous Ethicks,) though with great pretence of devotion, it acknowledges a Deity, yet so confounds this his fictitious Deity with every substantial being in the world besides, that upon the whole it appears altogether inconsistent with any rational exercise or sentiment of religion at all. And indeed, the mere pointing with the finger at the most discernible and absurd weakness of some of his principal supports, might be sufficient to overturn his whole fabric; though perhaps he thought the fraudulent artifice of contriving it geometrically must confound all the world, and make men think it not liable to be attacked in any part.

But whether it can, or no, we shall make some present trial; and for a previous essay, (to shew that he is not invulnerable, and that his scales do not more closely cohere, than those of his brother-leviathan,) do but compare his definition of an attribute.* "That which the understanding perceives of substance; as constituting the essence thereof" with his fifth Proposition, "There cannot be two, or more substances of the same nature, or attribute," which is as much as to say that two substances cannot be one and the same substance. For the attribute of any substance (saith he) constitutes its essence; whereas the essence therefore of one thing, cannot be the essence of another thing, if such an attribute be the essence of one substance, it cannot be the essence of another substance. A rare discovery! and which needed mathematical demonstration! Well, and what now? Nothing it is true can be plainer, if by the same attribute or nature, he means numerically the same; it only signifies one thing is not another thing. But if he mean there cannot be two things or substances, of the same special or general nature, he hath his whole business yet to do, which how he does, we shall see in time.

But now compare herewith his definition of what he thinks fit to dignify with the sacred name of God, † "By God (saith he) I understand a being absolutely infinite; that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, every one whereof expresses an infinite essence." And behold the admirable agreement! how amicably his definition of an attribute, and that mentioned proposition, accord with this definition (as he calls it) of God! There cannot be two substances, he saith, that have the same attribute, that is, the same essence. But now it seems the same substance may have infinite attributes, that is, infinite essences! O yes, very conveniently: for, he tells you that two attributes really distinct, we cannot conclude do constitute two divers substances. ‡ And why do they not? Because it belongs to the nature of substance, that each of its attributes be conceived by itself, &c. Let us consider his assertion, and his reason for it. He determines, you see, two really distinct attributes do not constitute two divers substances. You must not here take any other men's notion of an attribute, according to which, there may be accidental attributes, that, we are sure, would not infer diversity of substances for their subjects; or, there may be also essential ones, that only flow from the essence of the thing to which they belong; so, too, nobody doubts one thing may have many properties. But we must take his own notion of an attribute, according whereto it constitutes, or (which is all one) is, that very essence. Now will not such attributes as these, being really distinct, make di-

* Ethic. Part 1. Def. 4. † Definit. 6. ‡ Schol. in Prop. 10.

vers substances? Surely what things are essentially diverse, must be concluded to be most diverse. But these attributes are by himself supposed to be really distinct, and to constitute (which is to be) the essence of the substance. And how is that one thing, or one substance, which hath many essences? If the essence of a thing be that, by which it is what it is, surely the plurality of essences must make a plurality of things.

But it may be said, Cannot one thing be compounded of two or more things essentially diverse, as the soul and body of a man; whence therefore, the same thing, namely, a man, will have two essences? This is true, but impertinent. For the very notion of composition signifies these are two things united, not identified, that are capable of being again separated; and that the third thing, which results from them both united, contains them still distinct from one another, not the same.

But it may be said, though these attributes are acknowledged and asserted to be distinct from one another, they are yet found in one and the same substance common to them all. And this no more ought to be reckoned repugnant to common reason, than the philosophy heretofore in credit, which taught that the vast diversity of forms throughout the universe, which were counted so many distinct essences, do yet all reside in the same first matter, as the common receptacle of them all.

Nor yet doth this salve the business, were that philosophy ever so sure and sacred. For you must consider he asserts an attribute is that which constitutes the essence of the substance in which it is. But that philosophy never taught the forms lodged in the same common matter were its essence, though they were supposed to essentiate the *composita*, which resulted from their union therewith. Yea, it did teach they were so little the essence of that common matter, that they might be expelled out of it, and succeeded by new ones, and yet the matter which received them still remain the same. But that an attribute should be supposed to be the essence of the substance to which it belongs; and that another superadded attribute, which is also the essence of substance, should not make another substance essentially distinct, is an assertion as repugnant to common sense, as two and two make not four. But that which completes the jest, (though a tremendous one upon so awful a subject,) is, that this author should so gravely tell the world, they who are not of his sentiment, being ignorant of the causes of things, confound all things; imagine trees and men speaking alike, confound the divine nature with the human, &c. * Who would imagine this to be the complaining voice of one so industriously labouring to mingle heaven and earth! and to make God, and men, and beasts, and stones, and trees, all one and the same individual substance!

And now let us consider the reason of that assertion of his; † why two attributes really distinct, do not constitute two beings, or two distinct substances; because, saith he, it is of the nature of substance that each of its attributes be conceived by itself, &c. A marvellous reason! Divers attributes, each whereof, as before, constitutes the essence of substance, do not make divers substances; because those attributes may be conceived apart from each other, and are not produced by one another. It was too plain to need a proof, (as was observed before,) that there cannot

* Schol. 2. in Prop. 8. Part 1. † Schol. in Prop. 10.

be two substances of one attribute, or of one essence, (as his notion of an attribute is,) that is, two are not one. But that two attributes or essences of substance, cannot make two substances, because they are diverse, is very surprisingly strange. This was (as Cicero upon as good an occasion speaks) not to consider but cast lots what to say. And it deserves observation too, how well this assertion, "That two distinct attributes do not constitute two distinct substances," agrees with that,* "Two substances having divers attributes, have nothing common between them." This must certainly suppose the diversity of attributes to make the greatest diversity of substances imaginable; when they admit not there should be any thing (not the least thing?) common between them! And yet they make not distinct substances!

But this was only to make way for what was to follow, the overthrow of the creation. A thing he was so over intent upon, that in the heat of his zeal and haste, he makes all fly asunder before him, and overturns even his own batteries as fast as he raises them; says and unsays, does and undoes, at all adventures. Here two substances are supposed having distinct attributes, that is, distinct essences, to have therefore nothing common between them; and yet presently after, though two, or ever so many distinct attributes, give unto substance two, or ever so many distinct essences, yet they shall not be so much as two, but one only. For to the query put by himself, By what sign one may discern the diversity of substances? he roundly answers, (Schol. in Prop. 10.) The following propositions would shew there was no other substance but one, and that one infinite, and therefore how substances were to be diversified would be inquired in vain. Indeed, it would be in vain, if knowing them to have different essences, we must not yet call them different substances. But how the following propositions do shew there can be no more than one substance, we shall see in time. We shall for the present take leave of him, until we meet him again in the following discourse.

* Prop. 2.

THE

LIVING TEMPLE.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Wherein is shewn, I. The destructiveness of Spinosa's scheme and design to religion and the temple of God. II. The repugnancy of his doctrine to this assertion—That whatsoever exists necessarily and of itself, is absolutely perfect; which is therefore further weighed. III. His vain attempt to prove what he designs: also his second proposition considered. IV. His definition of a substance defective; and proves not his purpose. V. His third, fourth, fifth, and sixth propositions considered. VI. His fourth axiom examined. VII. His seventh and eighth propositions; his eighth Scholia. VIII. His inconsistency with himself, and with reason and religion. IX. *The manuductio ad pantosophiam—A guide to all kinds of wisdom.* X. Concluding remarks.

HITHERTO we have discoursed only of the Owner of this temple, and shewn to whom it rightfully belongs; namely, That there is one only necessary, self-existing, and most absolutely-perfect Being, the glorious and ever-blessed God—who is capable of our converse, and inclined thereto; whom we are to conceive as justly claiming a temple with us, and ready, upon our willing surrender, to erect in us, or repair such a one, make it habitable, to inhabit and replenish it with his holy and most delectable presence, and converse with us therein suitably to himself and us; that is, to his own excellency and fulness, and to our indigency and wretchedness. And now the order of discourse would lead us to behold the sacred structure rising, and view the surprising methods by which it is brought about, that any such thing should have place in such a world as this. But we must yield to stay, and be detained a little by some things of greater importance than merely the more even shape and order of a discourse; that is, looking back upon what hath been much insisted on in the

former Part—That some being or other doth exist necessarily and of itself, which is of absolute or universal perfection—and taking notice of the opposite sentiments of some hereto; because the whole design of evincing an object of religion would manifestly be much served hereby, we could not but reckon it of great importance to consider what is said against it. We have observed in the Preface a two-fold opposite hypothesis, which therefore, before we go further in the discourse of this temple of God, require to be discussed.

I. The first is that of Spinosa, which he hath more expressly stated, and undertaken with great pomp and boast to demonstrate, in his *Posthumous Ethicks;* which we shall therefore so far consider, as doth concern our present design. He there, as hath been noted in the Preface, asserts all "substance to be self-existent, and to be infinite; that one substance is improducible by another; that there is but one, and this one he calls God, &c." Now this horrid scheme of his, though he and his followers would cheat the world with names, and with a specious shew of piety, is as directly levelled against all religion, as any the most avowed atheism: for, as to religion, it is all one whether we make nothing to be God, or every thing; whether we allow of no God to be worshipped, or leave none to worship him. His portentous attempt to identify and deify all substance, attended with that strange pair of attributes, *extension* and *thought*, (and an infinite number of others besides,) hath a manifest design to throw religion out of the world that way.

II. And it most directly opposes the notion of a self-existent Being, which is absolutely perfect: for such a being must be a substance, if it be any thing; and he allows no substance but one, and therefore none to be perfect, unless all be so. And since we are sure some is imperfect, it will be consequent there is none absolutely perfect; for that the same should be imperfect, and absolutely perfect, is impossible. Besides, that he makes it no way possible to one substance to produce another, and what is so impotent must be very imperfect: yea, and whatsoever is not omnipotent, is evidently not absolutely perfect. We are therefore cast upon reconsidering this proposition —Whatsoever being exists necessarily and of itself, is absolutely perfect. It is true that if any being be evinced to exist necessarily and of itself, which is absolutely perfect, this gives us an object of religion, and throws Spinosa's farrago, his confused heap and jumble of self-existent being, into nothing. But if we carry the universal proposition as it is laid down, though

that will oblige us afterwards as well to confute his French confuter, as him; it carries the cause of religion with much the greater clearness, and with evident, unexceptionable self-consistency. For indeed that being cannot be understood to be absolutely perfect, which doth not eminently comprehend the entire fulness of all being in itself; as that must be a heap of imperfection, an everlasting chaos, an impossible, self-repugnant medley, that should be pretended to contain all the varieties, the diversifications, compositions, and mixtures of things in itself formally. And for the universal proposition: the matter itself requires not an immediate, self-evident, reciprocal connexion of the terms—necessarily self-existent, and absolutely perfect.—It is enough that it however be brought about by gradual steps, in a way that at length cannot fail; and I conceive hath been in the method that was followed in the former Part.

For, to bring the business now within as narrow a compass as is possible: nothing is more evident than that some being exists necessarily, or of itself; otherwise nothing at all could now exist. Again, for the same reason, there is some necessary or self-existent being that is the cause of whatsoever being exists not of itself; otherwise, nothing of that kind could ever come into being. Now that necessary being, which is the cause of all other being, will most manifestly appear to be absolutely perfect. For, if it be universally causative of all other being, it must both have been the actual cause of all being that doth actually exist, and can only be the possible cause of all that is possible to exist. Now so universal a cause can be no other than an absolutely or universally perfect being. For it could be the cause of nothing, which it did not virtually or formally comprehend in itself. And that being which comprehends in itself all perfection, both actual and possible, must be absolutely or universally perfect. And such a being, as hath also further more particularly been made apparent, must be an intelligent and a designing agent, or cause; because, upon the whole universe of produced beings, there are most manifest characters of design, in the passive sense; that is, of their having been designed to serve ends to which they have so direct and constant an aptitude: so that the attempt to make it be believed they were forced or fell into that posture of subserviency to such and such ends, by any pretended necessity upon their principal cause or causes, or by mere casualty, looks like the most ludicrous trifling to any man of sense. For among produced be-

ings there are found to be many, that are themselves actively designing, and that do understandingly intend and pursue ends; and consequently that they themselves must partake of an intelligent, spiritual nature, since mere matter is most manifestly incapable of thought or design. And also, by the most evident consequence, that their productive cause, (namely, the necessary, self-existing being, whereto all other things owe themselves,) must be a mind or spirit, inasmuch as to suppose any effect to have any thing more of excellency in it than the cause from whence it proceeded, is to suppose all that excellency to be effected without a cause, or to have arisen of itself out of nothing. See *former Part, Chap.* III. *Sect.* VII. *Page* 144.

Therefore if it did not immediately appear that necessary being, as such, is absolutely perfect being; yet, by this series of discourse, it appears that the main cause of religion is still safe; inasmuch as that necessary being which is the cause of all things else, is however evinced to be an absolutely perfect Being, and particularly a necessary self-existent Mind or Spirit, which is therefore a most apparently fit and most deserving object of religion, or of the honour of a temple; which is the sum of what we were concerned for. Nor did we need to be solicitous, but that the unity or onliness of the necessary Being, would afterwards be made appear, as also we think it was. For since the whole universe of produced being must arise out of that which was necessary self-existent Being, it must therefore comprehend all being in itself, its own formally, and eminently all other; that is, what was its own, being formally its own, must be eminently also all being else, contained in all possible simplicity, within the productive power of its own. This Being therefore containing in itself all that exists necessarily, with the power of producing all the rest, which together make up all being, can primarily be but *one*, inasmuch as there can be but one *all*. Upon the whole therefore, our general proposition is sufficiently evident, and out of question—That whatever exists necessarily, and of itself, is absolutely perfect. Nor is it at all incongruous that this matter should be thus argued out, by such a train and deduction of consequences, drawn from effects, that come under our present notice; for how come we to know that there is any self-existing Being at all, but that we find there is somewhat in being that is subject to continual mutation, and which therefore exists not necessarily, (for whatsoever is what it is necessarily, can never

change, or be other than what it is,) but must be caused by that which is necessary and self-existent. Nothing could be more reasonable or more certain than the deduction from what appears of excellency and perfection in such being as is caused; of the correspondent, and far-transcendent excellency and perfection of its cause. But yet, after all this, if one set himself attentively to consider, there must appear so near a connexion between the very things themselves, *self-existence*, and *absolute perfection*, that it can be no easy matter to conceive them separately.

Self-existence! Into how profound an abyss is a man cast at the thought of it! How doth it overwhelm and swallow up his mind and whole soul! With what satisfaction and delight must he see himself comprehended, of what he finds he can never comprehend! For contemplating the self-existent Being, he finds it eternally, necessarily, never-not existing! He can have no thought of the self-existing Being, as such, (Des Cartes,) but as always existing, as having existed always, as always certain to exist. Inquiring into the spring and source of this Being's existence, Whence is it that it doth exist? His own notion of a self-existing Being, which is not arbitrarily taken up, but which the reason of things hath imposed upon him, gives him his answer; and it can be no other, in that it is a self-existent Being, it hath it of itself, that it doth exist. It is an eternal, everlasting, spring and fountain of perpetually-existent being to itself. What a glorious excellency of being is this! What can this mean, but the greatest remoteness from nothing that is possible; that is, the most absolute fulness and plenitude of all being and perfection? And whereas all caused being, as such, is, to every man's understanding, confined within certain limits; what can the uncaused self-existent Being be, but most unlimited, infinite, all-comprehending, and most absolutely perfect? Nothing therefore can be more evident, than that the self-existent Being must be the absolutely perfect Being.

And again, if you simply convert the terms, and let this be the proposition,—That the absolutely-perfect Being is the self-existent Being—it is most obvious to every one, that the very notion of an absolutely-perfect Being carries necessity of existence, or self-existence, in it; which the notion of nothing else doth. And indeed one great Master (Dr. More) of this argument for the existence of God, hath himself told me, "That though when he had puzzled divers atheists with it they had been wont to quarrel at it, as sophistical and falla-

cious, he could never meet with any that could detect the sophism, or tell where any fallacy in it lay; and that, upon the whole, he relied upon it as most solid and firm." And I doubt not but it may be managed with that advantage as to be very clearly concluding; yet, because I reckoned the way I have taken more clear, I chose it rather. But finding that so near cognation and reciprocal connexion between the terms both ways, I reckoned this short representation hereof, annexed to the larger course of evincing the same thing, might add no unuseful strength to it; and doubt not to conclude, upon the whole, that—whatsoever Being exists necessarily, and of itself, is absolutely perfect—and can, therefore, be no other than an intelligent Being; that is, an infinite, eternal Mind, and so a most fit, and the only fit deserving object of religion, or of the honour of a temple.

III. But now, be all this ever so plain, it will, by some, be thought all false, if they find any man to have contrivance enough to devise some contrary scheme of things, and confidence enough to pretend to prove it; until that proof be detected of weakness and vanity, which must first be our further business with Spinosa. And not intending to examine particularly the several parts and junctures of his model, inasmuch as I find his whole design is lost, if he fail of evincing these things,—That it belongs to all substance, as such, to exist of itself, and be infinite—And, (which will be sufficiently consequent hereupon,) That substance is but one, and that it is impossible for one substance to produce another. I shall only attend to what he more directly says to this effect, and shall particularly apply myself to consider such of his propositions as more immediately respect this his main design: for they will bring us back to the definitions and axioms, or other parts of his discourse, whereon those are grounded, and even into all the darker and more pernicious recesses of his labyrinth; so as every thing of importance to the mentioned purpose will be drawn under our consideration, as this thread shall lead us.

His first proposition we let pass; "That a substance is, in order of nature, before its affections;" having nothing applicable to his purpose in it, which we shall not otherwise meet with.

His second, "That two substances, having divers attributes, have nothing common between them;" or, which must be all one, do *agree in nothing*, I conceive it will be no great presumption to deny. And since he is pleased herein to be

divided from himself, it is a civility to his later and wiser self to do so, who will afterwards have substance, having a multitude of distinct attributes, that is, essences, (*Schol. in Prop.* 10.) and which therefore cannot but be manifold, to have every thing common. So little hath he common with himself.

And it will increase the obligation upon him, to deliver him from the entanglement of his demonstration, as he calls it, of this proposition; as I hope we shall also of the other too, for no doubt they are both false. Of this proposition his demonstration is fetched from his third definition, namely, of a substance, "That which is in itself, and conceived by itself; that is, whose conception needs the conception of nothing else, whereby it ought to be formed;" so is his definition defined over and over.

IV. We are here to inquire:—Into his definition of a substance: and, Whether it sufficiently prove his proposition.

First, For his definition of a substance. He himself tells us, (*Schol. in Prop.* 8.) "A definition ought to express nothing but the simple nature of the thing defined;" and we may as well expect it distinctly to express that. Doth this definition express the simple nature of a substance, "That which is in itself," when it is left to divination what is meant by *is*, whether *essence*, or *existence*, or *subsistence?* And when we are to be at as random a guess, what is intended by being *in itself?* Whether being only contained, or being also sustained in, and by, or of itself? And supposing this latter to be meant, whether that self-subsistence exclude dependence only on another, *as a subject*, which we acknowledge true of all substance; or dependence *as on an efficient*, which if he will have to be taken for true of all, he was in reason to expect it should be so taken from his effectual proof, not from the reverence of his authority only: for what he adds, "And that is conceived by itself; and whose conception needs not the conception of any other thing by which it ought to be formed;"—would he have us believe this to be true, when afterward his tenth proposition is, "That every attribute of substance ought to be conceived by itself?" Whereupon then so many attributes, so many substances, it being the nature of a substance to be conceived by itself. But passing from his notion of a substance, let us consider,

Secondly, How it proves his proposition, that "Two substances, having different attributes, have nothing common between them." According to him, every attribute of substance

is to be conceived by itself; and yet have one and the same substance common to them all: therefore the distinct conception of things is, even with him, no reason why they should have nothing common between them. But as to the thing itself, he must have somewhat more enforcing than his definition of a substance, to prove that two (or many) individual substances may not have the same special nature common to them, and yet be conceived by themselves; having different individual natures or attributes, or different special natures, having the same general nature. Yea, and an equal dependence on the same common cause, which is a less ingredient in the conception of a thing, than the general or special nature is. And I doubt not, we shall find he hath not disproved, but that there is somewhat, in a true sense, common to them and their cause, that is of a conception much more vastly different from them both.

V. Whereupon, it is necessary to take distinct notice of his third proposition, "What things have nothing common between them, of them the one cannot be the cause of the other." In which nothing is to be peculiarly animadverted on, besides the contradiction in the very terms wherein it is proposed, *What things have nothing common between them.* How can they be things, and have nothing common between them? If they be things, they have sure the general notion of things common to them; there can therefore be no such things, that have nothing common. And let this be supposed to have been absurdly set down on purpose; yet now, for his demonstration hereof, it rests upon a palpable falsehood—that causes and effects must be mutually understood by one another; as we shall see more hereafter.

His fourth proposition we let pass; what it hath regardable in it, being as fitly to be considered under the fifth; "There cannot be two or more substances, in the whole universe, of the same nature or attribute;" unto which, besides what hath been said already, we need only here to add, that (whereas he hath told us, by the *attribute* of a substance, he means the *essence* of it) if he here speak of the same numerical essence or attribute, it is ridiculously true; and is no more than if he had said, One thing is but one thing. If he speak of the same special or general attribute or essence, it is as absurdly false; and for the proof of it, in the latter sense his demonstration signifies nothing. There may be more than one (as a stone, a tree, an animal) that agree in the same general attribute of corporeity, and are diversified by their special attributes; and

there may be many of the same special attribute, (namely, of rationality,) as John, Peter, Thomas, &c. that are distinguished by their individual ones. He might as well prove, by the same method, the identity of his *modi*, as of substances; as that there can be but one individual triangle in all the world, of one attribute or property, as but one substance. Let (for instance) one at Paris, another at Vienna, a third at Rome, a fourth at London, describe each an equilateral triangle of the same dimensions, or in a thousand places besides; each one of these do only make one and the same numerical triangle, because they have each the same attribute. But how are the attributes of these several triangles the same? What! the same numerically? Then indeed they are all the same numerical triangle; for one and the same numerical essence makes but one and the same numerical thing. But who that is in his right wits would say so? And if it be only said they have all attributes of one and the same kind, what then is consequent, but that they are all triangles of one kind? Which who in his right wits will deny? And if the attribute of a substance be that which constitutes its essence, the attribute of any thing else is that which constitutes its essence. See then how far Spinosa hath advanced with his demonstration of the identity of substance! If he prove not all substance to be numerically the same, he hath done nothing to his purpose. And it is now obvious to every eye how effectually he hath done that.

Whence also it is further equally evident, that his demonstration dwindles into nothing; and gives no support to his sixth proposition, which contains the malignity of his whole design, namely, "That one substance cannot be produced by another substance," which rests (as you see) partly upon the fifth, "That there cannot be two substances of the same attribute," which in his sense is, as hath been shewn, most absurdly false, and the attempt of proving it as absurd; partly upon his second, "That two substances, of different attributes, have nothing common between them," which might be said of whatsoever else, as truly as of substances; but which is also most evidently untrue; and partly, upon his third, "That such things as have nothing common between them, the one of them cannot be the cause of the other," which depends upon two false suppositions,—"That there can be two things, which have nothing common between them;" which, as hath been noted, contradicts itself, and needs not be further stood upon. And—"That whatsoever things are cause and

effect, the one to the other, must be mutually understood by one another," which we shall here more distinctly consider, it being also his second demonstration of the corollary of this his sixth proposition, (which nothing but a disposition to trifle, or having nothing to say, could have made him mention, as a corollary from this proposition, it being in effect but a repetition of the same thing,) namely, "That if one substance can be produced by another, (agent, or substance, which you please,) the knowledge of it must depend upon the knowledge of its cause, (by the fourth axiom,) and thereupon (by definition third) it should not be a substance."

VI. We are here to examine this his fourth axiom, "That the knowledge of an effect depends upon the knowledge of its cause, and doth involve it." An effect may be considered two ways; absolutely, as it is in itself, or relatively, as it is the effect of an efficient cause. It cannot, it is true, be understood to be the effect of such an efficient, but the knowledge that this was its efficient, is involved therein; for it is the same thing, and so much may be known, without knowing any thing of the nature of either the efficient or effect. But this signifies nothing to his purpose. He must therefore mean, that the knowledge of an effect absolutely considered, and in its own nature, depends upon and involves the knowledge of the nature of its efficient. Surely, the nature of a thing may be competently known by its true definition. But is the efficient cause, wont to be universally put into definitions? He tells us himself (Scholium second upon proposition eighth) "A true definition contains, or expresses, nothing, besides the mere nature of the thing defined." And let any man that thinks it worth it, be at the pains to examine his own definitions in the several parts of this ethico-geometrical tract, and see whether he always puts the efficient cause into every definition. And (no doubt) he thought himself to define accurately. If all other men, who have so generally reckoned the efficient and end, external causes, and only matter and form internal, and ingredient into the nature of things, and therefore only fit to be put into definitions, were thought by him mistaken and out in their reckoning, it was however neither modest nor wise, to lay down for an axiom, a thing so contrary to the common sentiment of mankind; and, without the least attempt to prove it, go about to demonstrate by it, in so portentous a cause; and lay the whole weight of his horrid cause upon it; expecting all the world should be awed into an assent, by the authority of his bare word; and not presume to disbelieve or doubt it, only because he is pleased to stamp the

magisterial name of an axiom upon it. If therefore any man assume the boldness to deny his axiom, what is become of his demonstration? And whereas it is commonly apprehended, that definitions are not of individual things, but of special kinds, and is acknowledged by himself, (*Prop.* 24.)—"That the essence of things produced by God, involves not existence, and the production of a thing is nothing else but the putting it into actual existence;" why may not the abstract essence, or nature of things, be well enough conceived and defined, without involving the conception of their productive cause? And this enough shews, also, That this definition of a substance proves not, that one substance cannot be produced by another: namely, "That which can be conceived by itself," for so it may, without involving the conception of that which produces it; and so be a substance sufficiently according to his definition. Though there can be no inconvenience in admitting, that things understood apart, by themselves, may be afterwards further and more clearly understood, by considering and comparing them in the habitudes and references which they bear as causes and effects (or otherwise) to one another.

VII. And now is his seventh proposition, "That it belongs to the nature of substance to exist." Which is so great a pillar, left itself without support; and being understood of substance as such, as his terms and design require it to be, it is manifestly impious, communicating the most fundamental attribute of the Deity, to all substance. And it is as little befriended by reason, as it be-friends religion; for it rests upon nothing but the foregoing baffled proposition: and this definition, (5.) of that which is its own cause; which is, "That whose essence involves existence, or which cannot be conceived otherwise than as existing;" whereas, it is sufficiently plain, we have a conception clear enough of the general nature of a substance as such, abstracted from existence, or non-existence, conceiving it only to be such, as if it exist, doth subsist in and by itself, that is, without having a subject to support it; though it may be such as to have needed a productive, and continually to need a sustaining efficient cause. Nor is there less clearness in this abstract conception of a substance, than there is in that of a modus, or accident, which we may conceive in an equal abstraction, from actual existence, or non-existence; understanding it to be such, as that if it exist, it doth inexist, or exist only in another. And now is our way sufficiently prepared to the consideration of his eighth

proposition; "That all substance is necessarily infinite." And how is it demonstrated? Why, by his fifth proposition,—"That there can be but one substance, of one and the same attribute,"—which hath been sufficiently unravelled and exposed, so as not to be left capable of signifying any thing here, as the reader will see by looking back to what hath been said upon it. And now it must quite sink; its next reliance failing it, namely, the foregoing seventh proposition,—"That it belongs to it, to exist necessarily." I grant the consequence to be good, and reckon it a truth of great evidence and concernment, "That whatsoever exists necessarily, is infinite." I heartily congratulate Spinosa's acknowledgment of so very clear and important an assertion; and do hope, as in the foregoing discourse I have made some, to make further good use of it. But for what he assumes, that all "substance necessarily exists;" you see it rests upon nothing, and so consequently doth what he would conclude from it, that all substance is infinite. And his further proof of it avails as little, namely, that it cannot be finite; because (by his second definition) if it be so, it must be limited by something of the same nature, &c. Which would be absurd by proposition fifth,—"That there cannot be two substances of the same attribute:" for that there be two, of the same individual attribute, to bound one another is unnecessary (as well as impossible) and absurdly supposed for this purpose. For if there were two of the same individual nature and attribute, they would not bound one another, but run into one; inasmuch as having but one attribute, they should, according to him, have but one and the same essence; and so be most entirely one, and that there cannot be two, or many times two, of the same special or general nature, is unproved; and the contrary most evident, as may be seen, in what hath been said upon that fifth proposition.

No man needs wish an easier task, than it would be to shew the falsehood or impertinency of his *Scholia* upon this proposition, and of his following discourse, to the purpose above mentioned. But I reckon it unnecessary, his principal supports being (I will not say overthrown, but) discovered to be none at all. I shall therefore follow his footsteps no further, only take notice of some few things that have a more direct aspect upon his main design, and make all the haste I can to take leave of him, that I may be at liberty to pursue my own. What is in his first Scholium follows, he says, only upon his seventh proposition, which itself follows upon nothing; and therefore, I further regar it not. His second

Scholium would have his seventh proposition pass for a common notion; and so it will, when he hath inspired all mankind with his sentiments. But why must it do so? Because substance is that which is in itself, and is conceived by itself? Now compare that with his tenth proposition,—"Every attribute of substance ought to be conceived by itself." There the definition of substance, is given to every attribute of substance; therefore, every attribute of substance is a substance, since the definition of substance (def. 3.) to which he refers us in the demonstration of that proposition, agrees to it; therefore, so many attributes, so many substances. What can be plainer? We have then his one substance multiplied into an infinite number of substances. By his sixth definition, we shall see his own confession of this consequence, by and by.

And whereas in this Scholium he would make us believe, that modifications, men may conceive as not existing, but substances they cannot. Let the reason of this assigned difference be considered; "That by substance they must understand that which is in itself, and is conceived by itself, its knowledge not needing the knowledge of another thing. But by modifications they are to understand that which is in another, and whose conception is formed by the conception of that thing in which they are: wherefore, we can have true ideas of not-existing modifications, inasmuch as though they may not actually exist, otherwise than in the understanding, yet their essence is so comprehended in another, that they may be conceived by the same. But the truth of substances is not otherwise without the understanding, than in themselves, because they are conceived by themselves, &c." Which reason is evidently no reason. For with the same clearness, wherewith I conceive a substance, whensoever it exists, as existing in itself; I conceive a modification, whensoever it exists, as existing in another. If therefore, any thing existing in another, be as truly existing, as existing in itself, the existence of a substance is no more necessary, than the existence of a modification. And if we can have true ideas of not-existing modifications, we may have as true, of not-existing substances: especially since (according to him) we cannot conceive of substance, without conceiving in it some or other modification. For he tells us, "The essence of modifications is so comprehended in another, that they may be conceived by the same." Now, what means he by the essence of modifications being comprehended in another? By that other, he must mean substance: for modifications do modify substances, or nothing;

and if the essences of modifications be contained in substances, they must (according to him) be contained in the essence of substances.

For there is, saith he, nothing in nature, besides substances and their affections or modifications (demonstration of proposition fourth, and definition fifth). Therefore, since nothing can be conceived in substance, antecedent to these modifications, besides its own naked essence, they must be contained immediately, in the very essence of substance, or in substance itself; wherefore, if all substance be necessarily existent, they must be necessarily inexistent. And if the essence of substance contains the inexisting *modi*, the essence of the *modi* doth equally contain their inexistence in substance. Whereupon, by consequence also, the essence of these modifications, doth as much involve existence (since no one can affirm inexistence to be existence) as the essence of substance doth, in direct contradiction to proposition twenty-fourth, which expressly (and most truly) says, "The essence of things produced by God" (which he, as untruly, intends of these modifications alone) "do not involve existence."

And now for his *notanda* in this Scholium by which he would conclude, that there is no other than this one infinite substance in being, p. 31. It is true indeed, that the definition of a thing (which we have before said is of specific natures, not of individuals) expresses not any certain number of existing individuals (be it man, or triangle, or what else you please) nor any at all. For surely the definition of man, or triangle, would be the same, if every individual of each, should be abolished and cease. But that, if any do exist, some cause must be assignable why they exist, and why so many only. What is to be inferred from this? That the reason being the same, as to every substance whose essence involves not existence in it, (which that the essence of every substance doth, or of substance as such, he hath not proved, nor ever can,) when any such substance is found to exist, the cause of its existence, not being in its own nature, must be external. And therefore, so many only do exist, because a free agent, able to produce them, (for the very substance of created beings itself, owes not its production to a merely natural, undesigning, or to any subordinate agent only,) was pleased to produce so many, and no more. And so hath this unhappy author himself, with great pains and sweat, reasoned out for us the very thing we assert.

But that it may be further seen, how incurious a writer this

man of demonstration is, and how fatally, while he is designing the overthrow of religion, he overthrows his own design, I shall not let pass what he says, in demonstrating his twelfth proposition,—"That no attribute of substance can be truly conceived, from which it may follow, that substance can be divided." How he proves it by proposition eighth, and after by the sixth, I shall not regard, until I see those propositions better proved. But that which I at present remark, is his argument from proposition fifth,—"That if substance could be divided, each part must consist of a different attribute; and so of one substance many might be constituted." A fair confession, that many attributes will constitute many substances. And himself acknowledges many attributes of substance, (definition sixth, and proposition eleventh.) And therefore, though he here call this an absurdity, it is an absurdity which he hath inevitably now fastened upon himself, having here allowed, plainly, the consequence (as was above promised to be shewn) that if there be diversity of attributes, they will constitute a diversity of substances, which it was before impossible to him to disallow, having defined an attribute (as was formerly noted) to be (def. 4.) that which constitutes the essence of substance. Therefore, his whole cause is here fairly given away; for his one substance is now scattered into many, and the pretended impossibility of the creation of any substantial being, quite vanished into thin and empty air. The many inconsistencies to be noted also in his annexed letters, with several parts of his discourse, it is not my business particularly to reflect on. It is enough, to *my purpose*, to have shewn that he comes short of *his*.

VIII. Upon the whole, little more seems needful for the refutation of this his horrid doctrine of the unity, self-existence, and infinity of all substance, than only to oppose Spinosa to Spinosa. Nor have I ever met with a discourse so equally inconsistent with all principles of reason and religion, and with itself. And so frequently doth he overthrow his own ill design, in this very discourse, that it is altogether unnecessary to insist on the inconsistencies of this, with his demonstrations of Des Cartes's principles, written divers years before. Against which, every one that hath compared, knows these his later sentiments to import so manifest hostility, that I may well spare that vain and useless labour, it being sufficient only to note the more principal, in the margin. *

* As his asserting God to be a most simple being, and that his attributes do only differ, *ratione*. Whereas now, he makes his attributes as

His following propositions (and among them those most surprising ones, the sixteenth and twenty-eighth) tend to evince the onliness of substance, and the absolute necessity of all actions; but upon grounds so plainly already discovered to be vain and false, that we need follow him no further. Nor is it necessary to disprove his hypothesis, or charge it with the many absurdities that belong to it, they are so horrid and notorious, that to any one who is not in love with absurdity for itself, it will abundantly suffice to have shewn he hath not proved it.

IX. I cannot but, in the mean time, take some notice of the genius, which seems to have inspired both him, and his devotees. A fraudulent pretence to religion, while they conspire against it. Whereof many instances might be given; as the prefixing that text of holy Scripture to so impure a volume, on the title page, 1 John 4. 13. "By this we know that we dwell in God, and God dwelleth in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." That the preface to his posthumous works is filled up with quotations out of the Bible; which it is their whole design to make signify nothing. The divine authority whereof, an anonymous defender of his, in that part of his work which he entitles, *Specimen artis ratiocinandi, naturalis & artificialis ad pantosophiæ principia manuducens—A specimen of the art of reasoning, natural and artificial, conducting to the principles of all kinds of wisdom*—undertakes to demonstrate (because, as he says, all religion depends upon the word of God) by an argument, which, he says, he can glory, that after many years meditation, the divine grace favouring him, he hath found out, by which he tells us, (p. 241, &c.) he is able (to do what, that he knows, no man hath ever done before him) to demonstrate naturally the truth of the sacred Scripture, that is, That it is the word of God. An argument, he says, able to convince the most pertinacious Pagan, &c. And it is taken from the idea of God, compared with that divine saying, Exod. 3. 14. "I am that I am." Whereupon, what he says, will to any one who attentively reads shew his design, namely, at once to expose religion, and hide himself. And so doth his collusion sufficiently appear in

divers, as extension and thought, and says, they ought to be conceived as really distinct. Scholia in Proposition tenth. There he asserts all things to be created by God, here, nothing. There he makes corporeal substance divisible; here, all substance indivisible, &c. And yet in this work (vide Scholia in proposition nineteenth) refers us to the former, as if, when the one destroys the other, both were firm.

making the soul philosophically mortal, and Christianly immortal, p. 70, &c. But if the Philosopher perish for ever, what will become of the Christian?

This author also finds great fault with the instances usually given to exemplify the common definition of substance, *That is, a being subsisting by itself, or in itself*, (Manuduct, p. 11, 12.) because he thought them not agreeable enough to his master Spinosa's notion of the unity and identity of all substances, and consequently of the improducibility of any. And he fancies them to contradict themselves, that while they call the sun, the moon, the earth, this or that tree, or stone, substances, they yet admit them to be produced by another. For how can it be, saith he, that they should be in, or by themselves, and yet depend on another, as on a subject, or as an efficient cause? He is very angry, and says they by it do but crucify and mock their readers, only because it crosses and disappoints his and his master's impious purpose of deifying every substance. And therefore, to serve that purpose as he fancies the better, he would more aptly model all things and reduce them to two distinct kinds only, namely, Of things that may be conceived primarily and in themselves, without involving the conception of another; and again, of things that we conceive not primarily and in themselves, but secondarily and by another, whose conception is involved in their conception. But all the while, what is there in this, more than what is common and acknowledged on all hands? as the sense of the trivial distich he takes the pains to recite,

Summus Aristoteles, &c.

But when all this is granted, what is he nearer his mark? Of that former sort, still some are from another; and one other only of and from itself. But then (says he) how are those former conceived in and by themselves? Well enough, say I; for they are to be conceived, as they are to be defined; but the definition of a thing is to express only its own nature and essence (as Spinosa himself says Scholium second, in proposition eighth) considered apart by itself, into which (as hath been said) the efficient cause, which is extrinsical to it, enters not; and without considering whether it exist or exist not. Because definitions are of special kinds, or common natures, that exist not as such; not of existing individuals, except the one, only self-subsisting, original Being, of whose essence existence is; which Spinosa himself acknowledges, and makes his twentieth proposition; as on the other hand

that "The essence of things produced by God involves not existence" is his twenty-fourth.

X. But that the substance of things, whose essence involves existence, and whose essence involves it not, should be one and the same, exceeds all wonder! One would think, so vastly different essences of substance should at least make different substances; and that when Spinosa hath told us so expressly, that an "attribute of substance constitutes the essence of substance; and that all the attributes of substance are distinctly conceived; the conception of the one, not involving the conception of another;" and so do most really differ from each other, and make so many essences therefore, of substance really distinct, (though he once thought otherwise of the divine attributes, that they did only differ from each other *ratione*, and that God was a most simple Being, which he also takes pains to prove, R. D. Cartes. Princip. Philos. Append. part. 2d. Cap. 5. p. 117, 118.) one would surely hereupon think, that so vastly different attributes, as necessary existence, and contingent, should constitute the most different substances imaginable. For what is an attribute? *Id quod intellectus de substantia percipit, tanquam ejus essentiam constituens—That which the understanding perceives concerning a substance as constituting its essence.* (Definition fourth.) Now the essence of some substance the understanding most clearly perceives as involving existence in it. Existence therefore constitutes the essence of such substance, and is therefore an attribute of it. Some other essence it as clearly perceives, that involves not existence. Now this sort of essence is the attribute of somewhat. And of what is it the attribute? Why, he hath told us, "An attribute is what the understanding perceives of substance as constituting its essence;" therefore, some substance hath such an essence as involves not existence.

Now let it hereupon be considered (albeit that I affect not to give high titles to any reasonings of mine) whether this amount not to a demonstration against the hypothesis of Spinosa, and the rest of his way, that all substance is self-existent; and that, even upon their own principles and concessions, so frequently acknowledging the world to be produced, and not self-existent, that even the substance of it is produced also; which they deny, namely, (Manuduct. p. 107.) That whose essence this unnamed author says, includes not existence, either hath some substance belonging to its essence, or it hath not. If not, it may exist without substance; and then unto what is it an attribute, or what doth it modify? If yea, there is then

some substance, and particularly that of this world, in whose essence, existence is not included; and that by consequence, the substance of this world is produced. But if any make a difficulty of it to understand, how all being and perfection should be included in the Divine Being, and not be very God; so much is already said to this in the former Part of this discourse, (namely, Chap. 4. Sect. III, &c.) that as I shall not here repeat what hath been said, so I think it unnecessary to say more.

And it is what Spinosa himself had once such sobriety of mind as to apprehend, when (Princip. R. D. Cart. Philosoph. more Geometr. demonstrat. Append. Part 1. Cap. 2.) he says thus of God, or of increate substance, that God doth eminently contain that which is found formally in created things, that is, God hath that in his own nature, in which all created things are contained in a more eminent manner; and that there is some attribute in God, wherein all the perfections, even of matter, are after a more excellent manner themselves contained. Having before told us, (Princip. Part 1. Axiom. 8.) That by eminently, he understood when a cause did contain all the reality of its effect more perfectly, than the effect itself; by formally, when it contained it in equal perfection. And so he might have told himself of somewhat sufficiently common (though not univocally) to the substance of the Divine Nature, and that of creatures; whereon to found the causality of the former, in reference to the latter, as effected thereby. But as he grew older, his understanding either became less clear, or was more perverted by ill design.

CHAP. II.

I. Animadversions upon a French writer, nameless. II. His pretence to confute Spinosa: and the opinion of the world's being made of independent self-existing matter; chosen by him and asserted against two other opinions. III. The opinion of matters being created out of nothing, and charged (falsely) by him with novelty. IV. Moses, and the author to the Hebrews misalleged, vindicated. V. Self-originate, independent matter disproved: asserted by this author with evident self-contradiction; and without necessity.

I. BUT having here done with him and that sort of men, I shall now briefly consider the forementioned author's

way of confuting him. The conceit, that there must be such a thing as necessary self-subsisting matter, hath I confess seemed to be favoured by some or other name among the Ethnics of that value, as to have given some countenance to a better cause; besides some others, who with greater incongruity, and more injury to it, have professed the Christian name. It hath been of late espoused, and asserted more expressly, by this French gentleman, who hath not thought fit to dignify it with his name, doubting perhaps whether the acquainting the world with it, might not more discredit his cause, than his cause (in this part of it) could better the reputation of his name. However it be, though my inquiry and credible information hath not left me ignorant, I shall not give him occasion to think himself uncivilly treated, by divulging what he seems willing should be a secret. For though it was not intrusted to me as such, I shall be loath to disoblige him by that, whereby that I know I can oblige nobody else. It is enough that his book may be known by its title, *L'Impie convaincu*. It is professedly written against the atheism of Spinosa. And when I first looked into it, I could not refrain thinking of Plato's repartee to Diogenes, when the latter undertook to reprehend the other's pride, that he did it with greater pride. Although I think not the application is to be made in the strictest terms. For I will neither be so indulgent to Spinosa, as to reckon that any man's atheism can be greater than his; nor so severe to this his adversary, as positively to conclude he designed the service of any atheism at all. But I think him at least, unwarily and without any necessity, to have quitted one of the principal supports of the doctrine of a Deity; and that he hath undertaken the confutation of atheism, upon a ground that leads to atheism.

II. He thinks, it seems, Spinosa not otherwise confutable, than upon the hypothesis of eternal, independent matter, which he thus explains in his preface, it being the second of the three distinct hypotheses whereof he there gives an account.

The second,* he says, is theirs who assert two beings or two substances increate, eternal, independent, as to their simple existence, though very differently; the former whereof is God, the infinitely perfect Being, Almighty, the Principle of all perfection; and the second, matter, a being essentially imperfect, without power, without life, without knowledge; but

* La seconde est celle de ceux qui, &c. Avertissement.

capable nevertheless of all these perfections, by impression from God, and his operations upon it. This he pretends to have been the hypothesis of the ancient philosophers and divines (after he had acknowledged the former hypothesis—"That the world, and the matter of it, were drawn out of nothing by the infinite power of the first and supreme Being, which itself alone was eternal and independent,"—was the hypothesis of the greater part of Christian divines, and philosophers.) And this second, he says, is the hypothesis which he shall follow, rejecting the first, but now mentioned; and in opposition to the third, which makes the world and its production to be nothing else than an emanation of the Divine Substance, whereby a part of itself is formed into a world. And this, he says, was the opinion of the ancient Gnostics and Priscillianists, and is for the most part of the Cabbalists, of the new Adamites or the illuminated, and of an infinite number of Asiatic and Indian philosophers.

III. To qualify the ill savour of that second opinion which he follows, he would have us believe it to be the more creditable, than the (rejected) first, which he says is a new thing in the world, and that it was not born until some ages after Christ; which is *gratis dictum—spoken without proof*. And whereas he tells us, he takes notice, that Tertullian was the first that maintained it against a Christian philosopher, who defended the eternal existence of matter; he had only reason to take notice, That the philosopher he mentions, was the first, that calling himself a Christian, had the confidence to assert an opinion so repugnant to Christianity and to all religion, and who therefore first gave so considerable an occasion to one who was a Christian indeed, to confute it. Nor was Hermogenes a much more creditable name with the orthodox, ancient Christians, than those wherewith he graces the third opinion, besides the other ill company which might be assigned it, if that were a convictive way of fighting, by names.

IV. And for what he adds, That Moses was, he dares say, of his opinion; because he only gives such an account of the creation, as that it was made of an unformed pre-existent matter: and the apostle Paul to the Hebrews, saying, God drew these visible things out of those that were not visible. He shews indeed, more daringness than solid judgment, in venturing to say the one or the other upon so slender ground. As if every thing were false, which Moses and Paul did not say. But it appears rather from his way of quoting, (who, it is like,

did not much concern himself to turn over the leaves of the Bible, that he might be sure to quote right,) that God did create that unformed matter, as he calls it. For it is expressly said, God created heaven, and earth, and that this earth (not matter) was without form, and void, Gen. 1. 1, 2. And if this unformed earth and matter be, as with him it seems, all one, then the unformed matter is said to have been created. For God is said to have created that unformed earth; which must indeed exist unformed, previously to its being brought into form; but not prior to all creation. And the same thing must be understood of the unformed heaven too, though Moses's design was to give us a more distinct account of what was nearer us, and wherein we were more concerned. And indeed, it seems most agreeable to the letter of the text, and to the following history, so to understand those words; "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," namely, That in the beginning, he created that, which afterwards became heaven and earth, that is, unformed matter. For heaven and earth as now they are, or as they were in their formed state, were not created in a moment, in the very beginning; but in several successive days, as the following history shews. And so much Tertullian aptly enough intimates to that Pseudo-christian Hermogenes, *Terræ nomen redigit in materiam, &c.—The name of earth he reduces into matter, &c.* Nor is Heb. 11. 3. capable of being tortured into any sense more favourable to his gross fancy, which (as the Greek text, if any will consult it, shews) doth not say, The things that are seen were made of things not appearing, but were not made of things appearing. As to what he adds touching the word *créer*, &c. I let it pass, not liking to contend about words often promiscuously used.

V. But shall apply myself to the consideration of the thing in question, and shew how inconsistently this author asserts independent matter, both with the truth and with himself; and also how unnecessarily he doth it, and that the defence of the common cause against Spinosa, did no way oblige him to it.

First, How inconsistently he asserts it, 1. With the *truth* of the thing; for,

(1.) Whatsoever exists independently and necessarily, is infinite. And herein I must do Spinosa that right, as to acknowledge he hath, in asserting it, done right to truth; though the grounds upon which he asserts it, are most perniciously false. But I conceive it is capable of being clearly proved (and hath been proved, Part 1st.) otherwise, namely, that ne-

cessary, self-originate Being, is the root and fountain of all being, whether actual or possible; since there is nothing actually brought in to being, which is not actually from it, and nothing possible, but whose possibility depends upon it. And that which virtually comprehends all being, actual and possible, cannot but be infinite. For without the compass of such all-comprehending Being, there is nothing to bound it. And what is bounded by nothing, is unbounded or infinite. Whereupon also, matter plainly appears not to be of itself. For if it were, for the same reason it must be infinite and all-comprehending. But nothing were more apparently contradictious and self-repugnant, than the assertion of two all-comprehending beings; and if there be but one, that matter is not that one. But that it must be a necessary, self-originate, intelligent Being, which is the root of all being, I conceive already sufficiently proved in the former part of this discourse. Wherein it is also shewn, that finite created beings, arising from that infinite self-originate one, limit it not, nor do detract any thing from its infinity, but concur to evidence its infinity rather; inasmuch as they could never have been, had they not been before contained within the productive power of that increate self-originate being. It is, by the way, to be noted that the notion of infinity we now intend, doth not merely import unconfinedness to this or that certain space, (though it include that too,) for that, alone, were a very maimed, defective notion of infiniteness. But we understand by it the absolute all-comprehending profundity and plenitude of essence and perfection. Whereupon, it signifies nothing to the preserving entire the infinity of the self-originate, intelligent Being, only to suppose it such, as that it can permeate all the space that can be taken up by another (supposed) self-originate being. For still, since its essence were of itself, it were not virtually contained in the other. Which therefore would evince that other not to be in the true sense infinite. Whereupon we

(2.) Prove the impossibility of independent, self-originate matter, from the known, agreed notion of God, namely, That he is a *Being absolutely perfect*, or *comprehensive of all perfection*. Even they that deny his existence, confess (though to the contradiction of themselves) this to be the notion of the thing they deny. Now, though this assertor of independent matter acknowledges it a being essentially imperfect, he can only mean by that, less perfect; not that it hath, simply, no perfection at all. It is idle trifling, to bragle about words. Perfection hath been wont to go for an attribute of being. He

calls it a being; it must therefore have some perfection, some goodness, be of some value. Is it not better than nothing? Then, that perfection must be eminently contained in God; otherwise, how is he a Being comprehensive of all perfection? The imperfections of matter belong not to him; nor of any thing else. For imperfection is nothing: nor do the perfections of any creature belong to him formally, or in the same special kind, but eminently, and in a higher and more noble kind. And so, to have all being and perfection, either for his own, or within his productive power, cannot, without contradiction, be denied of him, who is confessed to be God. And again, to be able to create, is surely a perfection. Omnipotency, more a perfection than partial impotency. Wherefore to assert matter could not be created by God, is to assert an impotent, imperfect God. Or (since God can be conceived under no other notion than of a Being absolutely perfect) to assert none at all.

(3.) This supposition not only denies to God all perfection, but it ascribes to matter, which he himself confesses the meanest sort of being, (as shortly it will be fitter to take further notice,) the high excellency of self-subsistence, the first and most fundamental of all divine perfections.

(4.) If matter be, as such, an independent, self-originate thing, then every part or particle of matter must be so. And then, let such matter be supposed to fill up infinite space, we shall have an infinite number of independent entities, co-existing for ever; for a finite number cannot replenish infinite space: or let it be supposed (more agreeably to the pretended sentiments of this author) confined within the limits of the formed universe; and how unreasonably is such a thing as independent matter, supposed to be of itself, limited to one spot of immense space! For let the universe be supposed finite, though ever so vast, it must yet be conceived but as a minute spot, to the infinite unbounded vacuity that lies without it; and which yet he seems to acknowledge replenished with the Divine Being. Now let a man set himself to consider, and try how easy it will be to his thoughts to conceive one little portion of boundless space, taken up with a mean being, next to nothing, that is of itself there, and cannot but be there, and nowhere else, imposed upon the infinitely perfect Being; the all-wise and almighty God, who fills up all space unavoidably and from all eternity, so that he could not, if he thought it a cumber, disencumber or rid himself of it; and rather seemed of necessity, than of choice, to have made a

world of it, as not knowing else what to do with it; with which imagination also the youth of the world so ill agrees, for why then was it so lately made?

(5.) But it further seems very evident, and more fully evidential of the absurdity of this conceit, that if there were such matter, the world could never have been made of it. For how great alterations must such rude, undigested, unformed matter have undergone, in forming of such a world as this? But what greater inconsistency can we imagine, than that what exists necessarily, or of itself, should be alterable? What is of itself what it is, must be eternally and without change what it is. So absurd, as well as profane, it will be to ascribe to dull and senseless matter, or to any thing else, so peculiar and appropriate an attribute and name as that of the Deity, *I am that I am*. For, hereupon, such matter were not only supposed vainly and to no purpose, being never possible to be the matter of the world, but destructively, and against the very purpose that should be served by it. For such matter being supposed to occupy the space of the formed world, must exclude thence any other matter of which it could be formed; and make it, consequently, impossible there should ever have been any such world as this, where the supposition itself makes it be. This see discoursed more at large, Part 1. Ch. 2.

(6.) And whereas his great reason for such self-originate, independent matter, namely, the imagined impossibility of creation, or that any thing can be produced out of nothing, (which so far as is needful, we partly have, and further shall consider, in its proper place,) doth as much oppose the creation of any spiritual being, as material. If all that hath been said in the former Part of this discourse, and by many authors besides, do sufficiently prove there are such spiritual or immaterial beings that are created, or are not of themselves; and that, of the property of thought, which is found belonging to them, matter is not capable, (which I shall think to have been done until I see the contrary evinced,) we must judge him very absurdly to have asserted such self-originate, independent matter. And as he hath asserted it very inconsistently with the *truth* of the thing; so

2. It will appear he hath done it as little consistently with himself. For

(1.) He acknowledges God to be *L'etre infiniment parfait, tout puissant, & le principe de toute perfection—a Being infinitely perfect, almighty, and the principle of all*

perfection. Now how is he infinitely perfect, if his being include not all perfection? How is he almighty, if he cannot create? How is he the fountain or principle of all perfection, if the perfection of matter (which, as hath been said, though he make it essentially imperfect, must have some perfection belonging to it, since it is not mere nothing) be not eminently comprehended in his being?

Besides that here acknowledging God to be omnipotent, and having denied the necessary, eternal, independent matter, which he imagines to be infinite, but limited and confined to the created universe only; I would hereupon demand of him, Cannot the blessed God, if he please, create many worlds? If he say, No, then how is he omnipotent?—If Yea, of what matter must they be made? Not of his (imagined) necessary, independent matter, for of that really none could: but according to him the present universe is made: it is already taken up, and pre-engaged therein, and it is limited thereto. Therefore the matter is yet to be created, of which the other worlds are to be made; and it can be so, otherwise no more worlds can be made: and thereupon the great God is, not without blasphemy, said to have gone to the utmost of his power, to have done in this kind all that he can. And this must be said, by this author, in express contradiction to the truth of the thing, to the most common and agreed idea or notion of the Divine Being; and now, most apparently, to himself. And therefore his high rant against Spinosa, p. 47, 48, (in this point more orthodox than himself,) That he confounds in his philosophy being and perfection, *Pretendant que, ce qui est, & ne renferme aucune negation d'etre, est une perfection, &c.—Pretending that whatsoever is, and includes not in its notion any negation of being, is a perfection, &c.* is vain, and as much without cause, as what he afterwards says about it is without sense. For he adds, That for his part he finds nothing more false or extravagant; and why so? Because then pain and sorrow must be reckoned among perfections, and such real perfections as are worthy of God, or a Being infinitely perfect. And upon this, he triumphs over such men, as supplanters of the Deity, instead of defenders of so great a Being, and as having lost their senses and their reason, &c. But if he had not lost his own, and abandoned himself to that fury and rage of insolence which he there imputes to his opposers, he might have been capable of so much calm and sober consideration, as to have bethought himself, that among creatures, a sense of pain, real grief and sorrow, correspond-

ent to their present, true causes, import more perfection, than stupidity, insensibleness, and apathy; and if so, though pain and grief cannot formally agree to the most perfect being of God, to whom their causes cannot agree, that the life and percipiency do eminently agree to him, by which he can apprehend an injury, though not a real hurt, (which he can therefore only not apprehend, not because the perceptive principle is wanting, but the object,) and by the power of imparting whereof, he is able to make a creature capable of pain and grief, where the objects shall (as they may deservedly) occur, and meet the perceptive principle; and that the power of making such a creature, is a greater perfection than an impotency of doing it. Which perfection, therefore, he could not, consistently with himself, deny to God, having acknowledged him a Being infinitely perfect, or comprehensive of all perfection.

(2.) Nor doth he assert necessary increate matter, consistently with his own reasonings for the possibility of a vacuum, (p. 110.) where he takes it for granted, that God can *aneantir une petite partie de la matiere, &c.—annihilate some small particle of matter,* one stone, for example, or one grain of sand. Which how ridiculously is it supposed, by one who supposes such matter necessarily self-existent! For who sees not that necessity of existence, and impossibility of non-existence, do infer one another, or signify rather the same thing. Therefore, no man, except Spinosa, could be at once more daring and more unhappy than this author. And as it hath thus appeared, that he hath asserted such self-originate, independent matter, very inconsistently both with the truth of the thing and with himself; so,

Secondly, It will also appear he hath done it very unnecessarily; and particularly, without that necessity which he pretends of answering Spinosa. For there is no necessity of it so much as pretended, upon any account besides that of the common maxim, that nothing can come out of nothing; the sense whereof must first be inquired before it can be understood, how far it will serve his purpose, or infer the necessity of independent matter. The sense of it must either be this—That a being could never arise out of no-being, of itself, without a pre-existent, creative cause; which is most evidently true, but as evidently not to his purpose: or this—That what once was not, could never be produced into being by a pre-existent, omnipotent Cause: which were to his purpose, but

is evidently, and by apparent self-contradiction, untrue.* And what can make it have so much as the least semblance of truth? Either the authority of the maxim, or some plausible reason. For its *authority:* though that which he claims to it of the ancient philosophers were little considerable, if ever so truly claimed, we have no ground to think it otherwise claimed than most untruly. Its authority, as he represents it, depends upon a worse authority. He is so modest as to expect it to be believed, upon his bare word, that this was the opinion of all the ancient philosophers before Christ's time; while yet he thinks not fit to tell us his name. But if their *reasonings* from it be considered, that generations are out of matter, and corruptions are into matter, we have no cause to apprehend they understood it otherwise than that natural agents did neither create nor annihilate any thing. Besides that, there is positive ground enough to conclude, that the more instructed and wiser Pagans, long before Christ's time, did believe all things to have sprang from one intelligent, self-subsisting original, matter itself not being excepted. As, with the Egyptians, the inscription of the temple at Sais shews, "I am all that is, or was, or shall be, &c." and with the Grecians, their worshipping God, under the name of *Pan:* which could mean no other thing, than that they thought the Deity to comprehend eminently or virtually all being besides, in its creative or productive power. And we have reason to think that Pagan philosophers since Christ, such as Hierocles, Jamblichus, Porphyry, Plotinus, &c. who (as others have observed) were manifestly of this sentiment, understood the minds of the more ancient philosophers as well as this French gentleman; nor do they pretend to contradict them herein.

And for the reason of the thing itself, he hath not the least appearance of any on his part, but that, because the finite power of a creature cannot bring a thing out of nothing, therefore omnipotency cannot; which is so far from concluding for him, that (as hath been intimated) it manifestly contradicts itself, and concludes the contrary. For how is that omnipotency, which cannot do every thing that implies not a contradiction? And how is that a contradiction, that what once was not, should afterwards come to be? there being no objective impossibility or intrinsic repugnancy in the thing itself to exist.

* Of this see at large Dr. Cudworth's Intellectual System.

but that it were truly *ens possibile—a possible agent;* (and we are out of doubt concerning matter for instance, or whatsoever else we are sure doth exist, that it could exist;) and supposing also that there be a sufficient, causative power, to make it exist, or produce it into being: and what cause can be more sufficient than an omnipotent one, such as our author confesses God to be? Nor doth he deny that there are intelligent spirits, that were not of themselves; only he would have us think them but finer matter, impressed with intellectual power. But what akin is a mind to matter, except his own? And supposing a mind or intellect be stamped upon matter, it is then but added to it, not drawn out of it, as if matter had before contained it. And even thus, since mind or intellect is not nothing, (unless he will say himself differs by nothing from unthinking clay,) we have something out of nothing. And who can think it more impossible to Omnipotency, to create matter, than a mind?

But if he reckon thought, or intellect, is contained in matter, or included in the notion of it, then matter, as such, must be intelligent, and consequently all matter; and this will be absurdity enough, to give him as good a title to the privilege of not being reasoned against, as, from his magisterial way of writing, we may count Spinosa thought himself to have. Nor indeed will it leave any man so much as a conjecture at the reason why he should pretend to differ from him. For who can imagine, why his matter, endued with the attributes of extension and thought, might not do as well as Spinosa's substance?

Or if he think matter, as such, to have only seminal reason or intellect in it, antecedently to his supposed divine impress upon it, how will that agree with his making it *essentiellement imparfait—essentially imperfect?* (Preface.) Or what means his added *capable neanmoins*, its being *nevertheless capable* of all such perfections by the impression of God upon it? Is that capacity something, or nothing? Or what sense is it to make it capable of having those perfections, which it is essential to it not to have?

And surely, as he will attribute to matter more perfection than he intended, so he will attribute less to God. For he will, at this rate, attribute no more to him, than hath been generally ascribed to ordinary natural agents; that is, to produce into actual being, out of matter, that whereto there was in it some seminal disposition before.

And here, indeed, is the source of his error, his reducing infinite power to the measures of finite; an insolent presuming to circumscribe Omnipotency, and making that simply impossible even to Almightiness itself, which is only so to created agents. And to this purpose, I find some reasonings in Sextus Empiricus, who tells us how the sceptics attempt to prove (besides their disputing against the other three sorts of causation) that ἀσώματον—*an incorporeal thing*, cannot be ἄιτιον σώματος—*the cause of any thing corporeal*; arguing (and slightly enough) from the common methods of subordinate agents, to the operations of the supreme Cause. Nor is it apprehensible, how one can find a medium; or while they make matter independent, how not to make God dependent.

And when the author we are concerned with took a friendly notice of Hermogenes' consent with him upon this subject, he might as well have been at the pains to consider somewhat of what Tertullian wrote against him, that hereby, in some respect, God is made *inferior and subject to matter, when without it he could not have made a world. Materiæ superior invenitur, quæ illi copiam operandi subministravit, & Deus subjectus materiæ videtur, cujus substantiæ eguit; nemo non subjicitur ei cujus eget, &c.—Every one is subject to what he stands in need of.* Tertull. contra Hermog.

CHAP. III.

I. The reason of what next follows. II. Directions to readers not wont to inquire into the grounds of their religion. III. A summary and plainer proposal unto such, of what hath been said in the former Part, concerning God's existence and conversableness with men. IV. The reasonableness (so much being already evinced) of alleging, and relying upon the testimony of the holy Scriptures: *First*, The expressness of that testimony concerning the unity of the Godhead, the trinity therein. *Secondly*, The absolute perfection of the Divine Nature. *Thirdly*, The infiniteness of God's knowledge, power, goodness, and presence. *Fourthly*, His propensions towards men, and aptness (supposing there were no obstruction) to human converse: matters of doubt herein resolved.

I. AND having thus far established and vindicated so principal a ground-work in this important cause,—That what is necessarily, or of itself, is an absolutely perfect Being, distinct from all things else; and a proper Object of religion, or whereto a temple, and all the worship thereof, duly belong —I shall now only suffer myself to be a little further diverted from my intended course, apprehending that their case is also to be considered, who have been less accustomed to this course, of reasoning out to themselves the principles of their religion: unto whom therefore what hath been hitherto attempted may seem, if not obscure in its parts, yet so tiresome in the whole, as not to meet with patience enough to trace the design that hath been driven on, to its issue and period; it being very incident to unexercised and less-attentive readers, to lose their thread, and forget the scope of a discourse, and so still have the truth to seek even in the midst of it. And if what hath been hitherto said, prove unsatisfying to any, that justice must be done to the cause itself and to them, as to avow that it must rather proceed either from this infirmity in the reader, or from the unskilfulness of the writer to propound things happily and to advantage; than either from the inevidence of the things themselves, or from want of capacity, even in an ordinary understanding. Nor doth any undertaking seem more feasible, or less to be despaired

of, than plainly and satisfyingly to evince, to an unprejudiced understanding that shall attend, these first foundations of religion and a temple, namely, That God is; and—That he is conversable with men, or is such as is capable and apt to receive worship from them, and impart blessedness to them. We shall therefore so far interrupt the current of this discourse, as to endeavour this, by giving a brief and plain sum of the more principal things that have been said to this purpose already.

II. But to prepare for it, must desire you that have not been, as yet, wont to employ your minds this way, to observe the following directions.

First, That you would not give place to discouragement, nor think too meanly of the understanding whereby God hath distinguished you from the inferior creatures. There is that mind and spirit in man, which doth compass many things of far greater difficulty than it is here to be employed about; though it can be exercised about nothing of so great consequence. That apprehensive power that can take in the orderly frame of such notions as are requisite to the exact skill of numbering or of measuring things, of navigation, of trade, of managing the common affairs of human life; that can lay down to itself such prudent maxims and rules whereby the inconveniencies may in great part be avoided which are incident to common conversation, and the advantages gained which may serve one's own private and secular interests; that understanding which can do all this, would far more easily comprehend as much as is needful to the certain knowledge of God's existence, and that he is such as we ought to worship, and may enjoy, if it apply itself hereto. Do not so despair as not to make an attempt; you know not the strength of your own mind until you have tried it.

Secondly, That you indulge not, or do not suffer yourselves to be insensibly seized by a mean and sordid sloth. Set your thoughts awork with vigorous diligence. Give not out before you have well begun. Resolve, since you have a thinking power about you, you will use it to this most necessary purpose; and hold your thoughts to it. See that your minds do not presently tire and flag; that you be rationally peremptory, and soberly obstinate, in this pursuit: yield not to be diverted. Disdain, having minds that can reach up to the great Original and Author of all things, that they should be confined to this dirty earth, or only to things low and mean.

Thirdly, Look on things that are rationally evident to your

understandings, as equally certain with what you see with your eyes. Are you not as sure that two and two make four (which judgment is the act of your mind) as that this thing which you look upon is black or white, or of this or that shape or figure? Do not so debase your own understandings, as to think nothing certain that comes under their judgment. It is true, they are apt enough to be deceived in many things, and so is your sense too; but if your sense could make you certain of nothing, what would become of justice and government among men? Who could take an oath before a magistrate? What would become of the common actions and affairs of life? How could you eat or drink, or buy or sell, if you could not certainly distinguish one thing from another? Some things are so plain as that you can be in no doubt about them, as that this is bread, not a stone; that a horse, not a sheep; otherwise all the world must stand still, and all commerce and action cease. And if there were not some things sure to your minds, that you may certainly say, in some plain cases at least, this is true and that false, this right and that wrong, you would be at as great a loss. Otherwise, you might be apt to think a part of a thing greater than the whole, or that the same man might be at London and at Rome at the same time; and you might be as ready to kill your own father as to do him reverence, or to commit robbery upon your rich neighbour as relieve the poor, and judge the one as good an action as the other.

Fourthly, As any particular thing is offered to you, for the purpose we are here aiming at, consider it well by itself, before you go further; and think thus, Is this plain and certain, yea or no? If at the first sight you think it not so, observe diligently what is brought for the proof of it, and see whether now it be not manifestly certain; and when you once find it is, fix it in your mind as a certainty; say, Thus far I am sure. Let not your thoughts run back to this as a doubtful thing any more, or unravel their own work; but make use of it as a certainty, to your further purpose.

III. Being thus prepared, take this brief account of what hath before been discoursed more at large.

First, As to this first and great principle,—That there is a God. Be but patient of being led by the hand a few easy steps in a way that is in some part sufficiently beaten, or at least that is sufficiently plain, and it is to be hoped you will soon see that matter put out of all doubt. Let this then be your first step:

1. That somewhat or other there is, that hath been from all eternity necessarily and of itself, without dependence upon any thing else. If this be not at the first view evident to you, or if it seem too large a step, we will divide it into parts; and consider well what is said for the proof of it, by these degrees.

(1.) Somewhat or other must *ever* have been: for otherwise, how could any thing come to be at all? Do you think it was possible, if ever there was nothing at all in being, of one sort or other, that any thing should have come into being? No surely, for which way should it be? It could not be made by another, there being no other to make it; and it could not make itself, itself being as yet nothing. But sure you can easily apprehend, that to make a thing be, is to do something; and as easily, that what is nothing, can do nothing. Therefore, when your own eyes tell you that something now is, you may be as sure, as of what you see with your eyes, that somewhat or other hath ever been. Say with yourself, *Somewhat now is*, therefore *somewhat hath ever been.* If you discern not the clearness of this consequence, take the opposite to it: *Nothing now is*, therefore *nothing will ever be;* it is as broad as long.

(2.) You may next proceed thus, that something or other hath been of *itself;* that is, without depending upon any thing else, or being beholden to any other thing for its being. Now here pause a while, and consider what is said to make this plain to you. Either you must acknowledge something hath ever been of *itself*, or you must say that all things that are, or ever have been, were from *another*, without any exception. But mark now, if you say that all things that are, or ever have been, without excepting any, were from another, you contradict yourself; for besides all things that are, or ever have been, without excepting any, there is not another from whom they could be. Therefore it is impossible that all things without exception should have been from another; whence then it is plain that something must have been of itself, without depending for its being upon any thing else: for it will come to the same contradiction, if you say all things depend upon some other; since there is nothing beyond all things: therefore, to say that all things depend, is to say they depend on nothing, that is, they do not depend. And to say they have all depended on one another for their being, or made one another, is altogether as absurd; for it will make the whole compass or circle of all being to depend upon nothing, or come

at length to this, that some one made itself, or even (which is more gross) made its own maker; unless you will rest in some one that made all the other, and was itself not made by any of them. If you do not apprehend this yourself, desire any one that hath a better understanding to explain it to you, and you will soon see the matter intended by it to be as evident as your heart can wish. And so this will be out of question with you—That somewhat was of *itself;* which added to what was proved before, comes to this—That somewhat was *ever* of itself. And both these thus conjoined, plainly appear from what hath been said. For we have seen that nothing could possibly make itself, (which would absurdly imply, that before, it both was and was not,) and therefore, whatsoever was of itself, must *ever* have been, or never had beginning of being. So much then, I suppose, you take to be most certain, that something hath ever been of itself. Whereupon you may further add,

(3.) That what was *ever* of *itself*, was *necessarily*. I hope you understand what is meant by being necessarily, that is, being so as that it could not possibly but be. You may perceive that some things are so as that it was possible they might not have been, as a house, a town, a garment, or whatsoever was made by such makers as might have chosen whether they would have made it, or no. Yea, or whatsoever is any way made to be, having before not been; for what once was not, it is manifest it was then possible for it not to be. But to be necessarily, is to be so as that it could never possibly but have been; that is, that which is necessarily, is somewhat of so excellent a nature, as that it could never be out of being. Now what was ever of itself, it was in this sense necessarily; namely, so as that the excellency of its nature was such, as could never permit that it should not be; whence the name I AM agrees peculiarly and always thereunto. Nothing can otherwise be of itself, (not by making itself, which you have seen is impossible,) but by an everlasting possession of that excellency of being, which excludes all possibility of not being. It depends upon no one's choice or power, whether that which is of itself shall be or not be.

(4.) What hath thus *ever been necessarily*, *still is*, and will *ever be;* which is plain upon the same ground. What *could* never but be, *can* never but be; for its nature is such, as whereto not to be is impossible. Otherwise, if its nature had not been such, there being nothing else by which it should be made, it could never have been. Wherefore thus far you

have firm footing in this first step; no part of the ground which it measures shakes under you. You may say you are sure of this—That somewhat there now is, that hath been from all eternity, necessarily and of itself, without dependence upon any thing else, and that can never cease to be. —Set this down therefore for a certainty, and then add to it,

2. That whatsoever is not necessarily and of itself, is from and by that which is necessarily and of itself, as the first Author and Cause thereof. This is so certain, that nothing needs to be said for the proof of it more than hath been said already, so that you do but understand the meaning of it; which you cannot but do, if you consider that all things that are, or ever were, must be of these two sorts, namely, what was of itself, and what was not of itself, but from another: therefore, what is not of the first sort, must be of the second; that is, what was not of itself, must be from another; and then, what other must it be from? Surely from what was of itself, as its first and chief cause, whatsoever inferior or secondary causes it may have had besides, that were before it, caused by that first. So that you now have plainly before you, and in view, some or other eternal, necessary Being, not only to be considered as it is in itself, but as the original and root of all besides. Then go forward a little, and further add,

3. Neither this visible world, nor any thing of it, is necessarily, or of itself, without depending upon any thing else; and was therefore created and made by some more excellent Being that was so, and is quite distinct and diverse from it. That this may be made evident to you, consider,

(1.) That whatsoever is changeable or imperfect, and capable of becoming more perfect, is not necessarily, and of itself, without dependence on any thing else. For what is of itself necessarily, and without dependence on any other, must have whatsoever belongs to it, all at once; for from whence should any addition or change happen any way to it? Not from any other, for it no more depends on another for addition, than it is liable to diminution by another, being what it is, necessarily, or from itself: for nothing can impart or add what it hath not; and what it hath was in it before, and was in it necessarily, and therefore unalterably, and without possibility of any change. Now you know this visible world is continually changing, and in an imperfect state; and we may add, that there is somewhat invisible, of whose present being we are certain, that was not of itself, and that did not make this world. For instance, we

are certain of the present being of our own mind and spirit, which we cannot see with our eyes, but by self-reflection we are sure we have somewhat in us that can think. Nor is there any thing that comes under our immediate, certain observation, more excellent than man himself, especially his mind and soul. And do you not yourself know, and find how changeable, indigent, and imperfect that is? Therefore you may be sure it is not of itself, nor the maker of this visible world. If all the men in the world should join all their wit and power together, which way would they go to work to make such a world as this? Yea, or even to make one single pile of grass, or grain of sand? Which way can you devise then, they should make the sun or stars, or such an earth as this? It is plain, then, that all this world had a maker, distinct from itself.

(2.) Whatsoever being is of itself, is more excellent than what is not of itself. This you cannot but assent to at the first sight: for besides that you must needs acknowledge it better to live of one's self, than to be beholden to another, you must also know that whatever being is not of itself, hath no excellency in it, but what was in that being that was of itself before; and therefore it had in it all the excellency that is in such things as proceeded from it, (unabated because in it necessarily,) together with the proper excellency of its own being, whereas the other sort of beings have but their own derived excellency only. Wherefore this also is most evident, that this world had a maker distinct from and more excellent than itself, that changes not, and whereto that name most properly agrees, I AM THAT I AM. Being sure of this, you may proceed, and conclude,

4. That the things which are manifestly not of themselves, but created and made, do plainly shew that the maker of them doth excel in power, wisdom, and goodness. The greatness of his works shews his mighty power; the nature, exactness, and order of them, his admirable wisdom; and his own self-sufficiency, and independency on the things made, shew his rich and vast goodness in making them, as you may see more at large in *Part I.* Now therefore, if you have attended, you cannot but find that you are sure and at a plain certainty concerning these four things:—That somewhat was ever, and is necessarily;—that what was not so, did arise from that which was;—that this world being not so, did therefore spring from that eternal, necessary, self-subsisting Being;—and that this Being hath those particular excellencies, whereof there

are the manifest appearances and footsteps in the works that are made by him, (namely, especially power, wisdom, and goodness,) in himself. And thus the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they who see them not are without excuse. Rom. 1. 20. If you be sure that any thing is, you may be sure somewhat was ever of itself: if you be sure any thing that was not of itself hath appearances of power, wisdom, and goodness in the frame of it, you may be sure that that Being which was of itself is the powerful, wise, and good Creator and Maker of it. It is to be hoped, then, you are at a certainty,—That *God is*.

Secondly, And now as to the second principle, that hath been insisted on also in the former Part,—That this God is conversable with men. You cannot surely doubt, but that he that made you, and gave you all that any way belongs to your being, can apply himself to you, or any of his creatures, in a way suitable to the natures which he hath put into you and them; nor that he is ready to converse with you, in a way suitable to the nature he hath given you, if you be such towards him, and so apply yourself to him, as you ought. For it is not a greater thing to do so, nor more exceeding or going beyond the reach of his power, wisdom, and goodness, as you cannot but see, than to have given being to you, and all things.

But now if what is further discoursed in that former Part, concerning the oneness of the Divine Being, and the infiniteness thereof, or concerning any other perfections there particularly asserted unto it, seem not so plain to you as is requisite to guide and facilitate your applications to him; what hath been more plainly said in this, is however sufficient, as more primarily fundamental and prerequisite to that further knowledge of his nature and will towards you, which in another way is to be had and sought after.

A cloud and darkness are now drawn over the world of mankind; and though it be still very easily discernible that *God is*, it is yet more difficult to attain to so distinct apprehensions *what* he is, as are necessary to our conversing with him. Against this difficulty, he hath afforded a gracious relief; that is, he hath provided there should be a more express discovery of him extant among men, than can be collected by their making observations upon this world. The case was such with man, (grown now so great a stranger to God,) as to re-

quire a written revelation of his nature and will; and we have it in those scriptures which bear with us the name of the word of God. It were indeed very unseasonable and absurd, to urge their authority in the inquiry, whether there be a God or no? For what authority have they more than other writings, but as they are God's word? Therefore to expect or give assent to them as such, while yet it remains an undecided controversy, whether there be any such one, or no, for whose sake the assent should be given, were to expose our religion, not to prove it. These holy writings were not intended, by their affirmation of it, to inform us of God's existence, which they suppose, and do not prove, as a thing we may otherwise be certain of; but to teach us our duty towards him, and what our expectations may be from him; and do therefore give us a true representation and discovery of his nature, (so far as it was needful for us preparatively first to know it,) and then next, of the present state of things between him and us, that we might be directed how to apply ourselves to him suitably to both the one and the other. It is true, that we can never know that there is a God, without knowing somewhat of his nature, or what a one he is. We cannot so much as inquire whether he be or no, but we must have some notion in our minds of the thing we inquire about; and so much as is necessary to this purpose, may be plainly gathered in the way we have gone hitherto. For if we understand the difference between something and nothing, between being and no being, and find that something is, or that there is some being; and again, if we understand the difference between a thing's being of itself, and being of or from another, and find the former must be the original of the latter, we cannot but understand ourselves, when we say there is an Original Being. And having some understanding what is meant by power, wisdom, and goodness; withal finding that not only the effects of these, but these very things themselves, are in the world, we cannot but be sure (because these things come not of nothing) that the Original Being is powerful, wise, and good. And now when we have thus found out an Original Being, that is of wisdom, power, and goodness sufficient to be the Author of such a world as this, we at once know both what God is, (sufficiently to distinguish him from all things else,) and are at a certainty that he is.

When we perceive that he hath given to all breath and being and all things; we have sought, and even felt and found him out, and found that he is not far from any one of us,

since in him we live and move and have our being; that he is every where present, in this his creation, as the great Sustainer and the Life of the universe; and forasmuch especially as we are his offspring, (as even the light of a Heathen poet could reach to discover,) even *we*, who are a sort of intelligent, designing, active beings, that therefore the Godhead is not like silver, or gold, &c. but of a nature more nearly resembling that of our own souls, and the higher excellencies of the best of his creatures, although eminently containing in himself also all the real perfections, virtues, and powers of all the rest: when we understand so much of God, (as we may by the light of our own reason,) we understand enough to give a foundation to religion, and to let us see he ought to have a temple, and worship: and another sort of temple than is made by men's hands, other worship than can be performed by the hands of men; as is there clearly argued, and inferred by the apostle, upon those plain grounds. Now when we are arrived thus far, it is seasonable to make use of the further help which we may observe the great, and wise, and good God to have most condescendingly, most aptly, and most mercifully afforded us, for our more distinct understanding of his nature, and our own state; and how we are to behave ourselves towards him thereupon.

IV. Taking notice therefore that there is a written revelation of him extant in the world, that bears his name, and gives itself out to be from him; if now we look into it, observe the import and design of it, compare it with what we before knew of his nature and our own; consider what is most obvious to an easy self-reflection in our own state and case, and how exactly this written revelation agrees and corresponds to those our former notices; taking in withal the many considerations that concur besides, to evidence to us the divine original and authority thereof: we cannot but have much rational inducement and obligation to receive, with all reverence and gratitude, this revelation, as from God; and to rely upon it, as a sure and sacred light sent down from heaven, to direct us in all our concernments God-ward. For finding our own great need of such an additional light, and apprehending it sufficiently agreeable to the divine goodness to afford it, and expecting it to be such, in its scope and design, as we find it is: if we further consider it must have had some author, and perceiving it not easy, with any plausible pretence, to affix it to any other than God himself: if we consider that it was impossible it could be invented by men, without some design

of self-advantage, either in this world or in the other; and how absurd any such expectation must be, either from men here, (the contents thereof being so repugnant to the common inclinations of men, as to oblige those that owned them to the severest sufferings on that account,) or from God hereafter, who could not be expected to reward forgery, falsehood, and the usurpation of his name! If again, we further observe the positive attestations whereby he hath challenged and owned it as his own, and wherein the divine power hath borne witness to the divine truth contained in it; if the matters of fact on which all depends appear not less certain than that there were men and nations in the world, that we have not seen, and before we were born: if we see it not only improbable, but even next to impossible, that the records of those miraculous attestations should have been forged, and nations imposed upon thereby; and amongst them, many of the wisest of men in those very times when the things recorded were alleged to have been done, and in a matter wherein their eternal hope was concerned; * we shall upon the whole see cause to judge, That as it were most absurd to suppose such a revelation given by God, and no sufficient rational evidence withal given that it is from him, (without which it cannot serve its end, and so would signify nothing,) so that there is nothing wanting, in divine estimate itself, to make up such a sufficient, rational evidence; nor in our own, unless we would suppose it necessary that every man should have a Bible reached him down by an immediate hand from heaven, or make some other supposition as fond and vain as that; or that we count not that sufficient evidence, which ought to satisfy our reason, if it do not gratify our fancy and curiosity too. It is not fit, here, to say more of the divine original of those holy writings, nor needful; so much being written already, † with so great clearness, on that subject, by many. That therefore being out of question what you cannot reason out yourselves, or apprehend from the reasonings of others, concerning God's nature tending to represent him worthy of a temple with you, and capable of receiving and rewarding your sincere and spiritual worship, fetch out from that divine volume; for you may be sure, though you can-

* If we take notice that in some parts of this Vol. there are very ancient predictions, of the strangest and most unlikely events, that we see exactly fulfilled in the other parts.

† Dr. Stillingfleet, in his Origines Sacræ. Grotius de Verit. Chr. Relig. Huet. Demonstr. Evangel. &c. Mr. Baxter's Reasons of Christian Religion. With many more.

not search him out unto perfection, he perfectly understands himself, and is certainly such, as he there tells you he is: and he there reveals himself to be such, as to whom the temple and worship we here intend, cannot be doubted (as he hath ordered things) to be both due and grateful. Whatever might be otherwise matter of doubt, is by his express discovery of himself, taken away.

If it were still a doubt, after all that hath been formerly said for the reasoning out of these things, whether the Deity be one only, or manifold; whether the world had but one, or had not many makers; and so, whether there be no danger of misapplying our religion, or of mistaking the object of our worship. This word plainly tells us,

First, That there is but *one* God, the Father, of whom are all things. 1 Cor. 8. 6. That he is God, and there is none else. Isa. 45. 21, 22. And that however there be three that bear witness in heaven, and the stamp of whose name is, in our baptism, distinctly and solemnly put upon us; Mat. 28. 1 John 5. yet (as in many other instances, that may be in some respect three, which in some other respect is but one) without the unnecessary, punctual declaration, how these are three, and how but one, it expressly tells us, *these three are one.*

And if it be yet a doubt with us (in which the reasonings of some may be too short to determine and resolve them) whether this one God be so absolutely and every way perfect as to be sufficient for us all; whether he can understand all our concernments, relieve us in all our necessities, hear our prayers, satisfy our desires, receive our acknowledgments and thanksgivings, and take notice with what love and sincerity they are tendered unto him; or, if he can do for us according to our necessities, and reasonable desires; whether we have any ground to believe that he will; this word of his plainly assures us,

Secondly, That he is God all-sufficient; Gen. 17. 1. that he hath all fulness in him. It often represents him to us, under the name of the Lord God Almighty: tells us that he can do every thing, and that he doth whatsoever it pleaseth him. It tells us his understanding is infinite, and particularly assures us that he searches the hearts of men, and tries their reins; that they cannot think a thought, or speak a word, but he understands them afar off, and knows them altogether: that his eyes are upon all the ways of men; that he knows all things, and therefore knows if they love him.

And that we may be the more fully put out of doubt how easy it is to him to do so, we are assured,

Thirdly, That he is everywhere present, that he fills heaven and earth, that the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him; that there is no going from his Spirit, or flying from his presence; that if one go up to heaven, he is there; lie down in hell, he is there; go to the uttermost part of the sea, yet there his hand shall lead, and his right hand hold them.

Fourthly, And that all doubt may vanish, concerning his will and gracious inclination, how expressly doth he make himself known by this name? namely, That he is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, &c. Exod. 34. 7. And by the same blessed and inspired penman of a part of these holy writings, (the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of his only-begotten Son; who also is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him,) we are not only told that God is Light, whereby the knowledge, purity, simplicity, and glory of the Divine Being are represented, but also, once and again, that God is Love, that we might understand him as a Being not of more glorious excellency in himself, than of gracious propensions towards his creatures. And lest it should be thought our meanness should exempt us, and put us beneath his regard, we are told, He taketh care for sparrows, he heareth the ravens when they cry; and generally, that the eyes of all wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in season, Ps. 145. (which even the brute creatures are emphatically said to seek of God) and that he opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Ps. 104. And besides what he hath so expressly testified concerning his own nature, his favourable inclinations towards men might sufficiently be collected from that very nature which he hath given to man, considered in comparison and reference to his own: that he made him in his own image; and that he being the Father of spirits, hath placed a spirit in man, so agreeable to his own spiritual nature; and by his own inspiration given him that understanding, that the mind begotten corresponds, by its most natural frame and constitution, to the mind that begot, the νοῦς πατρικὸς, (as it was anciently called,) *his own Eternal Mind:* and that if its own original be remembered, it turns itself towards him, seeks his acquaintance by an instinct he hath himself implanted in it, and cannot rest until he have such a temple erected in it, wherein both he and

it may cohabit together. By all this, his aptness to that converse with men, which is imported in the notion of a temple, doth so far appear, that at least it is evident such converse cannot fail to ensue, supposing that there were nothing in the way that might be a present obstruction thereto. And it will more appear, when we have considered (since there is somewhat that obstructs this converse) what he hath done to remove the obstruction, and how he hath provided that the intercourse may be restored, and his temple be resettled with men, upon everlasting foundations.

CHAP. IV.

I. That there is an obstruction to this intercourse. II. The method of the following discourse. *First*, Man's apostasy from God, and the vitiated state of his nature; 1. Not only represented in the sacred Scriptures, but also, 2. Acknowledged and lamented by Pagans:—in some respects very mistakenly; wherein perhaps some of them not justly understood:—This not the primitive state of man; therefore not to be imputed to the Author of nature. *Secondly*, The temple of God hereby made waste and desolate, and become, 1. Unfit for the divine presence, being, (1.) Unsuitable, and, (2.) Disaffected. 2. Hereupon forsaken, and most justly. *Thirdly*, The new foundation and platform of his present temple laid in Immanuel.

I. BUT so far it is, that there should want probability of a very inward commerce between God and man, that we have reason to think it rather strange, considering his nature and our own, it should not have been continual; and that his unbounded and self-communicative fulness was not by him always afforded, and always imbibed and drawn in by so capable and indigent a creature. One would wonder what should have discontinued this intercourse! What can be so apt to give and flow out, as fulness? What should be so apt to receive and take in, as want and emptiness? Such a commerce then as can be supposed between one * that is rich and full, and them that are poor and necessitous, one would think should have never failed. So a fabulous dream may be significant, and not uninstructive, touching the reason and way

* Porus and Penia.

of commerce between God and creature. We are therefore put upon a new inquiry, and need no longer spend ourselves in anxious thoughts, Can there be any converse between God and men? That we may rather say, How can it not be? or, How strange is it there is not more! that he hath not a temple in every human breast, replenished with his vital presence! that there are nothing but ruins and desolation to be found, where one would expect a fabric worthy of God, and an indwelling Deity! This must therefore be the sad subject of our thoughts a while, What hath rendered the blessed God so much a stranger on earth, and occasioned him in so great part to forsake his terrestrial dwelling? Whence we shall have the advantage (seeing how just cause there was, on his part, for this deplorable distance) to adore the grace that returns him to us, and inclined him to take that strange course, which we find he did, to repair his forlorn temple, and fill this desolate, forsaken world with the joyful sound of those glad tidings, "The tabernacle of God is with men." We shall find he is no further a stranger in this world, than as we have made and continued him so: no further a home-dweller in it, than as by an admirable contrivance of wisdom and love, which will be the eternal wonder of the other world, he hath made way for himself: whereby his propensions towards men, prevailing against so great an obstruction, do even now appear at once both evident and marvellous, and ought to be not only the matter of our belief, but admiration.

II. Wherefore our discourse must here proceed by these steps, to shew—That mankind hath universally revolted, and been in a state of apostasy from God;—that hereby the temple of God in man hath been generally made waste and desolate;—and that he hath laid both the new foundations and the platform of his present temple in Immanuel, God with us, his own incarnate Son, who rebuilds, beautifies, furnishes, inhabits it, and orders all the concernments of it.

First, Mankind hath universally revolted, and been in a state of apostasy from God. This we do little need to labour in—every man's own reflection upon the vitiated powers of his own soul, would soon, as to himself, put the matter out of doubt; whence each one's testimony concerning his own case, would amount to a universal testimony. No man that takes a view of his own dark and blinded mind, his slow and dull apprehension, his uncertain staggering judgment, roving conjectures, feeble and mistaken reasonings about matters that concern him most; ill inclinations, propension to what is un-

lawful to him, and destructive, aversion to his truest interest and best good, irresolution, drowsy sloth, exorbitant and ravenous appetites and desires, impotent and self-vexing passions—can think human nature, in him, is in its primitive integrity, and so pure as when it first issued from its high and most pure original. By such reflection, every man may perceive his own ill case, in these and many more such respects; and by observing the complaints of the most serious, and such as have seemed most to study themselves, collect it is generally so with others also.

1. They that have read the sacred volume, cannot be ignorant that all flesh have corrupted their way; (Gen. 6.) that the great God, looking down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God, (Ps. 14. 2.) hath only the unpleasing prospect before his eyes even of a universal depravation and defection; that every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one; that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Rom. 3. 10—23.) that this world lieth in wickedness: (1 John 5. 19.) and that this was not the first state of man, but that he is degenerated into it from a former and better state: that "God made him upright," but that he is become otherwise, by his own "many inventions:" (Eccl. 7. 29.) that by trying conclusions to better a state already truly good, he brought himself into this woeful plight; and by aiming at somewhat above, sunk so far beneath himself into that gulf of impurity and misery, that is now become to him as his own element and natural state.

2. Yea and the matter hath that evidence, that even many of them who, for aught we know, never conversed with those sacred records, have no less clearly discovered their sense of the present evil state of man, than their ignorance of the original of that evil, though some of them carefully acquit God of it. *Max. Tyr. Diss.* 25. We find their complaints * *of the malignity of ignorance* surrounding all the earth, and that corrupts the soul shut up in the body: that, as a garment and web, inwraps the minds of men, that they cannot look to him whose pleasure it is to be known, and who is not to be heard with ears, nor seen with eyes, or expressed by words. That till it be rent in pieces, they have upon them † *the bond of cor-*

* The so controverted Merc. Trismeg. c. 7. Secund. M. Ficin. Interpret.

* τῆς ἀγνωσίας κακίαν. † τῆς φθορᾶς δεσμὸν.

ruption, the dark coverture, the living death, the sensible carcass, a moving sepulchre, which they carry about with them.

We find complaints, that * *by bonds and chains our mind is held, from our infancy:* of certain "mean and debasing passions, that do fasten and even nail the soul to the body:" of † *much greater evils, and more grievous, than the most painful bodily diseases, gouts, stranguries, dysenteries, and myriads of the like; namely, all manner of sins, wickednesses, transgressions, ungodlinesses, which we have to lament as the maladies or disaffections of our soul.*

Of certain ‡ *old or inveterate spots*, that are by all means to be washed and purged out: that there are certain § *principles of viciousness*, as pleasures, griefs, lusts, fears, enkindled from the body, but mixed with the soul, and that absurdly bear rule over it.

And the naturalness of these is more than intimated, while they are said to be ‖ *rather from parents and our first elements than ourselves*: or, ¶ *rather to be imputed*, as is elsewhere said, *to those that plant, than those that are planted.*

Whence also, ** *vice is said to be involuntary:* (being rooted in our natures:) that whosoever are vicious, *become* so, from such things as do even prevent our choice. And that †† *all men do more evil than good, beginning even from their very childhood.*

And (as another expresses it) we offend from certain ‡‡ *involuntary passions*, in which the pravity of the soul is made to consist: or §§ *that we here partake a certain mundane nature*, which, he says, is mixed of *mind and necessity.*

* ἐιργμῶν καὶ συνδέσεων τὸν καλεχόμενον, ἐκ βρεφῶν, νῦν. Iamb. de vit. Pythag.

† περὶ τὸ σῶμα πλευρίτιδες, περιπλευμονίαι, φρενίτιδες, ποδάγραι, στραγγουρίαι, δυσεντερίαι, &c. περὶ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν πολλῷ μείζονα καὶ χαλεπωτερά. ἄθεσμα, κακὰ, παρανομίαι, ἀσεβήματα. Idem.

‡ —ἐγκατεσκιρῤῥώμεναι κηλίδες, p. 256, Hippar. Pythag.

§ ἀρχὰι κακίας.

‖ ἐκ τῶν γενετόρων καὶ στοιχείων, μᾶλλον ἢ ἐξ ἁμέων. Plat. Tim. Loer.

¶ ἀτιμότερον μὲν τὰς φυτευόντας ἀεὶ, τῶν φυτευομένων μᾶλλον. Idem Timæus.

** κακοὶ, δι' ἀκουσιότητα γιγνόμεθα. Ibid.

†† ἀρξάμενοι ἐκ παίδων, καὶ ἐξ ἁμαρτάνουσιν ἄκοντες. Idem Hipp. Major, p. 296.

‡‡ ἀκούσια παθήματα. Plotin. Enne. 1. Lib. 8.

§§ μεμιγμένη γὰρ ἦν δὴ ὁ τῆ κόσμῳ φύσις ἐκ τε νοῦ, καὶ ἀνάγκης. Idem p. 77.

And even from hence that * *virtue is voluntary; vice is, by another, concluded to be involuntary.* "For," says that author, "who can willingly, in the most lovely and most noble part of himself, choose that which is the greatest of all evils?" esteeming vicious inclination the most repugnant thing to liberty, (as it is indeed in the moral sense,) and the greatest slavery. Whereupon, another inquiring, since God doth nothing but what is good, whence evils should come, resolves that whatsoever is good is from heaven, but † *all evil* from our *self-natural vileness.* And another speaks of an evil adhering to our being, and not only acquired, but ‡ *even connatural to us; yea, and this evil is said to be the very death of the soul.* The sadness of the common case of man in this respect, hath been therefore emblematically represented by § *a potion of error* and *ignorance, presented to every one at their first coming into the world, and whereof it is said all do drink, more or less;* a woman called Imposture, accompanied by other harlots, Opinion, Lust, Pleasure, &c. seizing and leading away every one. And hence are ‖ *bitter complaints and accusations poured forth even against nature itself, as being a mere force and war, and having nothing pure or sincere in it,* but having its course amidst many unrighteous passions; yea, and its rise and first production are lamented, as founded in unrighteousness. The discontentful resentments whereof have made some not spare to censure our very make and frame, the uniting ¶ *of an immortal thing to a mortal* in the composition of man, as a kind of distortion of nature, that the thing produced, should be made to delight in having parts so unnaturally pulled and drawn together.

So that some of the ethnick philosophers have been so far from denying a corruption and depravation of nature in man, that they have overstrained the matter, and thought vicious inclination more deeply natural than indeed it is; and so

* τῷ δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἑκούσιον εἶναι ἔπεσθαι τὸ τὴν κακίαν ἀκούσιον ὑπάρχειν, &c. Alcinous Cap. 30.

† ἐξ ἀὐλοφυοῦς μοχθηρίας, Max. Tyr. Dissert. 25.

‡ τὸ παρεπόμενον τῇ ὑσιᾳ ἡμῶν κακὸν. Hiero. in Carm. Pythag.

§ τὰς ἐισπορευομένας εἰς τὸν βίον πολίζει, πάντες πίνουσιν, ἀλλὰ οἱ μὲν πλεῖον, οἱ δὲ ἧττον. Tab. Cebetis.

‖ Empedocles and Heraclitus are represented as (πολλάκις ὀδυρόμενοι καὶ λοιδορεῖσθαι τὴν φυσιν ὡς ἀνάγκην καὶ πόλεμον οὖσαν, ἀμιγὲς δε μηδὲν μηδὲ εἰλικρινὲς ἔχουσαν) often bewailing and reproaching human nature, as being a principle of force and hostility, and having nothing pure or sincere.

¶ τῷ θνητῷ συνεζευγμένην ἀθανάτῳ, &c. Plut. de solert. anim. p. 964.

taxed and blamed nature, in the case of man, as to be too liable to implied reflections even on the blessed Author of nature himself. Whereto the known principles of the sect of the Stoics * do too plainly tend, who give in so vast a catalogue of the diseases and distempers of the mind of man: taking every thing into the account that hath the least of perturbation in it, without excepting so much as mercy itself, or pity towards them that suffer unjustly; and yet seem to subject all things to fate and natural necessity, whereby all these evils in the mind of man would be rejected upon the holy God, as their original Cause. Whence therefore some that were more sober have made it their business to vindicate God from so horrid an imputation; † and one of much note

* D. Laert. L. 7. But perhaps they have been somewhat misunderstood by their prejudiced opposers, or some unwary expressions of theirs been stretched beyond what was meant. For though they reckon ἔλεος (*compassion*) among the distempers of the mind; yet so afterwards they do ἀνελεημοσύνη (*the want of compassion*) too. Whence it is probable they intended to place ἔλεος (*compassion*) among the evils of man's nature no otherwise than as it should include undue perturbation in it, or as it might urge those who are more apt to be passionate upon such occasions, than just and wise, to the doing of unfit or unseasonable things for the afflicted person's relief; than which nothing is more supposable: which occasioned that famous general Agesilaus, when his sick friend importuned him with tears, to stop the (then necessary) march of his army for his sake, (looking sadly back upon him,) to say, ὡς χαλεπόν ἐστιν ἐλεεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν, (*How hard is it to be pitiful and wise!*) Plutar. Apophtheg. Lacon. And that afterwards making ἀνελεημοσύνη vicious too, their meaning was, that a calm and sedate will or propension to relieve persons in distress was the virtue, both the other the opposite vices. Which seems more likely than Menagius's way of salving the ἐναλλοφανὲς, by supposing ἀνελεημοσύνη here to have been miswritten for ἐλεημοσύνη, by some very assuming transcribers, that were willing rather to express their own mind than their author's. Observ. in Locum.

† And though in what follows they are sharply taxed, as laying all the evils of the world (moral as well as other) upon God and nature. This seems to have proceeded from some lavish speeches of Chrysippus, that justly fell under the representation of Plutarch's severer and more sound judgment. Yet surely they did suppose another, and purer state of nature, out of which man was lapsed; otherwise, how come they, when they assign the common notion of vicious perturbation or passion, to call it an irrational and [παρὰ φύσιν κίνησις] preternatural motion? What nature is that, which it is supposed to swerve from? Besides that, they constantly call these diseases of the soul, therefore they understood them not to be its very nature: for then what were the diseased subject? Nor could it agree with that known dogma of theirs, that virtue is διδακτόν τι, a thing to be taught, if they should suppose vice in that sense natural. And indeed, that Plutarch entitles that book he hath against them,

animadverts upon the mistakes of such as seemed so to charge him, sharply blaming them for such an intimation; but more sharply (perplexing others in his own dubious twilight) for the excuse they give of it, namely, That God doth what they attribute to him in this matter, for the punishment of wicked men; * alleging it were a grievous matter that God should will and revenge the same thing, that wickedness should both be, and be punished, according to the mind of God. † Some do, with great reverence of the divine majesty, confess the rise of all this evil to be from man himself, namely, even that sort of evil which is called by the name of wickedness, is said to be from an innate principle, which the arbitrary power of a man's own soul hatcheth and fosters, and the fault is his who admits it; but God is faultless: ‡ that God did place the soul over a terrene body, as a charioteer over a chariot, which it might govern or neglect, &c. §

So another says, ‖ *that whatsoever things come into this world from God, are good; but evils proceed from a certain ancient nature, &c.* By which what could he mean, but the hereditary pravity which hath in a long series descended from depraved progenitors, so as no longer to be a new thing; but of a forgotten original, and from of old reigning in the world?

They of this famous sect, the Platonists, seem often to attribute vicious inclination to the soul's being united with the body; (as supposing it to have existed pure and sinless before;)

περὶ τοιῶν ἐναντίων, argues, they intended not the gross things he refutes, for no man intends contradiction to himself. And since no man can hold both parts of a contradiction, it is candid to suppose they would have chose rather to let go the worse part.

* Ἀλλὰ μὲν τον θεὸν κολάζειν φησι τὴν κακίαν καὶ πολλὰ ποιεῖν ἐπὶ κολάσει τῶν πονήρων—They admit, however, that God punishes wickedness, and does many things for the punishment of the wicked.

† ἐστὶ μὲν δὴ τοῦτο δεινὸν τὸ καὶ γίνεσθαι τὴν κακίαν καὶ κολάζεσθαι καλὰ τὸν τοῦ Διὸς λόγον—This is indeed a dreadful notion, that, pursuant to the appointment of God, evil should both exist and be punished. Plutar. de Repugnan. Stoicorum.

‡ ἀρχὴν τὴν αὐτοφυῆ, ἡ ψυχῆς ἐξουσία κινήσει τε καὶ τελεσφορεῖ, ἧ ὄνομα μοχθηρία. αὐτῆ τε ἑλομένη αἰτία. Θεὸς ἀναίτιος—The self-born principle, which the power of the soul conceives and brings to maturity, and whose name is mischief. The cause lies in the being who chooses it. God is not chargeable with it. Max. Tyr. ubi supra.

§ As he there proceeds.

‖ ὅσα παρὰ θεῦ, ἀγαθὰ· τὰ δὲ κακὰ ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίας φυτείας, Plot. Enneadi. 1. 1. 8. p. 77.

yet even they appear also not to have thought it impossible a human soul should sometime have been in an earthly body without sin. For their renowned leader discourses at large of a former incorrupt state of man in the body, (a golden age, as others also call it,) and of a defection or apostasy from it; which state, though his Egyptian tradition misinformed him about the continuance of it, he excellently describes (as also man's declining from it,) telling us, that "then God familiarly conversed with men, taking care of them, as a shepherd of his flock: that he was chiefly intent upon the ducture and government of their minds; that (as he afterward says in another part of that unfinished discourse) while **the godlike nature continued in sufficient vigour with them*, they were obedient to laws, and behaved themselves friendly towards that †*divine thing that was akin to them*. Then they possessed thoughts that were true, and altogether great; using meekness and prudence in reference to their own conditions and one another: that they disregarded all things in comparison of virtue. They easily bore a prosperous condition, esteeming all outward things little. They were not intoxicated or drunken with sensual delights; but sober and quick-sighted, and all things increased upon them through their mutual love and virtue. But they growing at length into a too great esteem and love of terrene things—‡*and that participation which they had of God* decaying (whereas all was well while the Divine Nature remained with them) and being variously intermingled with §*much deadly evil*, and a kind of human custom or course of living," as elsewhere he so expresses sinful corruption, "prevailing among them, and they not able to bear a prosperous condition, came to shame, and to ruin with it; having lost the loveliest of their most precious things." Agreeably whereto, another, discoursing of the nature and original of evil, places it in our being plunged and sunk into matter and corporeity: and commenting upon a noted passage of his master, (in Theætet.) namely, "That our recovery must be by a speedy flight to God," &c. says, that ‖*this flight is not to depart from the earth, but that we become, even while we are on earth, righteous, and holy, and wise.*

Therefore also have we with this sort of men, so frequent discourses of the purgative virtues, which suppose a lapse

* ἢ τῷ θεοῦ φύσις ἀὐλοῖς ἐξηρκεῖ.
† πρὸς τὸ συγγενὲς θεῖον.
‡ ἢ τῆ θεᾶ μοῖρα.
§ πολλῷ τῷ θνητῷ.
‖ οὐ τὸ ἐκ γῆς ἀπέλθειν ἀλλὰ, &c. Plot. Enne. 1. lib. 1.

into great impurities; yet not so inseparable from our natures, but that by divine help (which they also sometimes speak of as necessary) a cure and redress may be wrought.

Nor, if we consider, can it be so much as imaginable to us, that the present state of man is his *primitive* state, or that he is *now* such as he was at first made. For neither is it conceivable, the blessed God should have made a creature with an aversion to the only important ends, whereof it is naturally capable: nor particularly, that he created man with a disaffection to himself; or that ever he at first designed a being of so high excellency as the spirit of man, to drudge so meanly, and be so basely servile to terrene inclinations; or, that since there are manifestly powers in him of a superior and inferior sort and order, the meaner should have been, by original institution, framed to command; and the more noble and excellent, only to obey and serve: as now, every one that observes may see the common case with man is. And how far he is swerved from what he was, is easily conjecturable, by comparing him with the measures which shew what he should be. For it cannot be conceived for what end laws were ever given him, if, at least, we allow them not the measures of his primitive capacity, or deny him ever to have been in a possibility to obey. Could they be intended for his government, if conformity to them were against or above his nature? or were they only for his condemnation? or for that, if he was never capable of obeying them? How inconsistent were it with the goodness of the blessed God, that the condemnation of his creatures should be the first design of his giving them laws; and with his justice, to make his laws the rule of punishment, to whom they could never be the rule of obedience and duty; or with his wisdom, to frame a system and body of laws, that should never serve for either purpose, and so be upon the whole useful for nothing? The common reason of mankind teacheth us, to estimate the wisdom and equity of law-givers, by the suitableness of their constitutions to the genius and temper of the people for whom they are made; and we commonly reckon nothing can more slur and expose government, than the imposing of constitutions most probably impracticable, and which are never likely to obtain. How much more incongruous must it be esteemed to enjoin such as never possibly could! Prudent legislators, and studious of the common good, would be shy to impose upon men under their power, laws against their genius and common usages, neither alterable easily, nor to any

advantage. Much more absurd were it, with great solemnity and weighty sanctions to enact statutes for brute creatures! And wherein were it more to purpose to prescribe unto men strict rules of piety and virtue, than to beasts or trees, if the former had not been capable of observing them as the latter were not? We insist not on the written precepts in the sacred volume, (where we have also the history of man's creation and fall,) but let the law be considered which is written in men's hearts; the νόμος δημιουργικὸς, the τάξις ἔννομος, or the *lex nata* (in the ethnick language) * *which the eternal lawgiving mind hath created in our souls.* And how evidently doth that law convince, that we neither are, nor do what we should? How gross and numerous deformities do we daily behold by that shattered and broken glass? how many things which we disapprove, or certainly would, if we discussed the matter with ourselves? How frequent buffetings are many, when they reflect, constrained to suffer at their own hands; even wherein (not having another law) they are only "a law to themselves," and have only their own thoughts, either their excusers, or accusers? And what doth that signify, but a lapse and recess from their original state? the broken imperfect memorials whereof, are a standing testimony against their present course; their notions of right and wrong, comely and uncomely, remonstrating against their vicious inclinations and ways. For would they ever reprove themselves for what was not possible to be otherwise? Or was man created a mere piece of self-contradiction; or with a nature made up of repugnancies, and perpetually at war with itself? This I should do, but that which is clean contrary I have a mind to. Were these ever like to be impressions, both, signed upon him by the same hand? Nothing is plainer therefore, than that he is corrupted from his primitive integrity, and become a depraved and a degenerate thing.

Secondly, We go on then, in the next place, to shew,—That by this degeneracy, the temple of the living God among men, became waste and desolate: namely, both uninhabitable or unfit for his blessed presence; and—thereupon, deserted and forsaken of it. And (because in breaches and disagreements man hath the first hand and part) we shall therefore treat, 1. Of the unfitness of man, in his state of apostasy, to entertain the divine presence, or be any longer God's temple;

* ταῦτα ὁ νομοθέτης νοῦς διαθεσμοθετᾷ ταῖς ψυχαις. Hierocl. p. 19. and 210.

and, 2. Of the blessed God's absenting himself, and estrangement from him hereupon.

1. That the spirit of man, by his having apostatized, became *unfit* to answer the purposes of a temple, will too plainly appear, by considering the nature of that apostasy; which, what was it but a severing himself from God; a recess and separation? Not in respect of place, (which was impossible,) but the temper of his mind and spirit; or not by a local removal, but by unsuitableness and disaffection, departing in heart from the living God. It is true indeed, that by this his revolt, he became indisposed to all other converse which belonged to him as a creature intelligent and virtuous, but chiefly to divine: the blessed God being the chief term of this defection and revolt. For man, by his original rectitude, was principally determined towards God; and by the same due bent and frame of spirit by which he stood rightly postured towards him, he was in a right disposition to every thing besides wherewith he had any concern. And adhering to him as his centre and prime object, he kept his due order towards all other things: whence by forcing and relaxing the bonds that held him united to God, and by changing his posture towards him, he came to stand right no way. Turning to him the back, and not the face, all things are inverted to him. He is now become most directly opposite to God, and unduly disposed towards other things only by means of that opposition. As then he is unfit for every other good use, so most of all for that of a temple; and that upon both the above-mentioned accounts, as being first unsuitable to the blessed God, and then thereupon disaffected.

(1.) Man was become most *unsuitable* to him; the divine image (which where should it be but in his temple) being now defaced and torn down. We speak not now of the natural image of God in man, or the representation the soul of man hath of its Maker in the spiritual, intelligent, vital, and immortal nature thereof, which image we know cannot be lost; but its resemblance of him in the excellencies which appear to be lost, and which were his duty, a *debitum inesse*, and could not be lost but by his own great default. And those are both such as wherein the soul of man did imitate and resemble God, as knowledge, purity, justice, benignity, &c. and such as wherein though it could not imitate him, yet was to bear itself correspondently towards him; as he being the absolute Sovereign, to be subject to him, obey and serve him: and he being the all-sufficient Good, to trust in

him, depend upon him, know, love, and delight in him, unite with him, and expect blessedness only in and from him. How unlike and disagreeable to God in all these respects is apostate man! That whereas the notion given us of God, is, that he is Light, and with him is no darkness at all; (1 John 1.) it is said of such as have been involved in the common apostasy, in reference to that their former state, "Ye were darkness;" as if that were the fittest and truest account that could be given of this revolted creature: not that he is in darkness, or there is much darkness in him, but, "He is darkness." He and darkness may define one another—That is he; and he is that. A dismal horrid cloud hath inwrapped his soul, that resists and yields not easily to the most piercing beams, excludes light, wheresoever it would insinuate itself. This hath made the soul of man a most unmeet receptacle for the divine presence, and more like a dungeon than a temple. And as he is now sunk into carnality, and a low, abject, earthly spirit, how unfit is he for divine converse! How unapt to savour the things of God! How unlike the Father of Spirits! And whereas he was of a middle nature, partaking somewhat of the angelical, somewhat of the animal life, how is he swallowed up of the latter, and become like the beasts that perish; as the horse and mule without understanding, as the dog and swine both for fierceness and impurity; as the one is both apt to bite and devour, and return to his own vomit, and the other both to rend such as stand in his way, and wallow in the mire. We might add the sundry other Scripture resemblances of wolves, bears, lions, serpents, adders, vipers, &c. whereby many brutes seem to meet in one man; and to have made a collection, and contributed their worst qualities, and all the venom of their natures, to the making up of one mischievous composition in him. So that instead of a temple, he is a cage of every unclean and hurtful thing: he is, in short, of a reprobate mind, full of all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c. How repugnant, in all respects, to the holy, pure, benign, merciful nature of God! How remote from the imitation of his Maker, wherein he hath offered himself as his most imitable pattern! And wherein he is not imitable, but requires a proportionable and correspondent deportment or conformity; as by trust to his all-sufficiency, by subjection to his sovereign power and government. How dismal is the case, and how horrid the effects of the apostasy in these regards! How preposterous and perverse are his dispositions

and the course he hath run! For wherein it was permitted to him to imitate and affect likeness to a Deity; where he was put under no restraints, and his highest aspirings had been not only innocent, but most worthy of praise, (as to imitate God in wisdom, righteousness, sincerity, goodness, purity, &c.) here nothing would please but utmost dissimilitude, and to be as unlike God as he could devise. But in those things that were within the inclosure, and appropriate most peculiarly to the Godhead; to be the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega; the only one on whom all must depend, and to whom all must be subject and obey: these sacred regalia, the highest rights and flowers of the eternal crown, these are thought fine things, and beheld with a libidinous devouring eye, caught at by a profane sacrilegious hand. Nothing would satisfy but to be Godlike in this most disallowed and impossible sense. Man, when he hath reduced himself to the lowest pitch of vileness, misery and penury, now will be self-sufficient; and when he is become the most abject slave to ignominious lusts and passions, now he will be supreme: that is, having made himself viler than the meanest creature, and worse than nothing, he will be a God, even his own, a God to himself. Having severed and cut himself off from God, he will supply the room, and live only within himself; be to himself what God was, and should ever be. He now moves wholly in his own sphere, disjoined from that of the whole world, and is his own centre. All he does is from himself, and for himself. Thus is the true image of God torn down from his own temple, and that alienated, and become the temple of a false God, dedicate to that abominable idol, self.

(2.) Whence it comes to pass, that man is most *disaffected* to God, and full of enmity. So Scripture testifies concerning the carnal mind, Rom. 8. 8. And what it had before represented (ch. 2.) full of all malignity, it afterwards speaks of as directing it (most horrid to think!) against this blessed object; "Haters of God, despiteful, &c." Nor is any thing more natural; for, in part, the contrariety of their nature to his, more immediately begets this enmity, which always rises out of dissimilitude; and partly it is fomented and increased to a great degree, by a secret consciousness of that dissimilitude, and the misgivings of their own guilty fears thereupon: which must tell them, whensoever they have so much communication with themselves, that they are unlike, and cannot but be unpleasing to him: and this infers some kind of dread; whence (as hath been commonly observed) the passage is short and easy

unto hatred. And though the more positive workings of this enmity do not (perhaps with the most) so ordinarily discover themselves; and they do not see or suspect that they hate him, while they are not urged to self-reflection; and when they are, hardly admit a conviction that they do: yet the matter carries its own evidence with it, and would soon be put beyond a question, if men were willing to understand the truth of their own case. For whence else do they so slowly entertain the knowledge of God, when the whole earth is full of his glory? When so manifest prints and footsteps of his wisdom, power, and goodness, do offer themselves to view in every creature, whence can it be, but that they like not to retain him in their knowledge? Rom. 1. And that their very hearts say to him, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways? Job 21. Why is so bright a light not observed, but that it shines amidst a malignant darkness, that, resisting, comprehends it not? Why are the thoughts of God so unpleasant to men and unfrequent, that when one would suppose no thoughts should be so obvious, none so welcome, yet it is become the character of an unrenewed man to forget God, (Ps. 9.) or not to have him in all his thoughts? Ps. 10. Why do men decline his acquaintance, live voluntary strangers to him all their days, and as without him in the world? Ephes. 2. Why are men so averse to trust him, and turn to him, even upon so mighty assurances? What makes them shy to take his word, but rather count him a liar, though they know it inconsistent with his nature; and can form no notion of God, without including this conception therein, that he cannot lie; when as yet they can ordinarily trust one another, though there be so much colour to say, "All men are liars?" Why do they resist his authority, against which they cannot dispute, and disobey his commands, unto which they cannot devise to frame an exception? What, but the spirit of enmity, can make them regret so easy a yoke, reject so light a burthen, shun and fly off from so peaceful and pleasant paths; yea, and take ways that so manifestly take hold of hell, and lead down to the chambers of death, rather choosing to perish than obey? Is not this the very height of enmity? What further proof would we seek of a disaffected and implacable heart? Yet to all this, we may cast in that fearful addition, their saying in their heart, No God; (Ps. 14.) as if they should say, O that there were none! This is enmity, not only to the highest pitch of wickedness, (to wish their common Parent extinct, the

Author of their being,) but even unto madness itself. For in the forgetful heat of this transport, it is not thought on that they wish the most absolute impossibility, and that, if it were possible, they wish, with his, the extinction of their own, and of all being; and that the sense of their hearts, put into words, would amount to no less than a direful and most horrid execration and curse upon God, and the whole creation of God at once! as if by the blasphemy of their poisonous breath, they would wither all nature, blast the whole universe of being, and make it fade, languish, and drop into nothing. This is to set their mouth against heaven and earth, themselves, and all things at once, as if they thought their feeble breath should overpower the omnipotent word, shake and shiver the adamantine pillars of heaven and earth, and the almighty *fiat* be defeated by their *nay*; striking at the root of all! So fitly is it said, The *fool* hath in his heart muttered thus! Nor are there few such fools: but this is plainly given us as the common character of apostate man, the whole revolted race; of whom it is said, in very general terms, "They all are gone back, there is none that doeth good." This is their sense, one and all; that is, comparatively; and the true state of the case being laid before them, it is more their temper and sense to say *no God*, than to repent, and turn to him. What mad enmity is this! Nor can we devise into what else to resolve it.

This enmity, indeed, more plainly shews itself where the Divine Glory (especially that of his grace, and good-will towards men, a thing not less evident, than strange!) more brightly shines: yet there are so manifest appearances of it every where, and he hath so little left himself "without witness" unto any, that the universal strangeness of men towards him apparently owes itself more to enmity than ignorance; and even where there is much darkness, there is more ill-will. For their ignorance, by which they are alienated from the life of God, is called blindness of heart; that is, voluntary, affected blindness, Eph. 4. 18. It can be imputed to nothing else, that they who have God so near to every one of them, who live, and move, and have their being in him, do not yet seek after him, and labour to feel and find him out; that is, that they can miss of God so nigh at hand, when they have even palpable demonstrations of his nearness, and kind propensions towards them. Now this being the case, whatever this degenerate vile creature might serve for else, he was plainly most unfit for the use of a temple, or to be the dwelling-place of God.

2. Nor can it now be a wonder that the divine presence should be hereupon withdrawn; that the blessed God absents himself, and is become a stranger to this his once beloved mansion. We shall here take notice how apparent it is—That he hath done so, and—That he was most highly justifiable herein.

(1.) That God hath withdrawn himself, and left this his temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front (yet extant) this doleful inscription—"*Here God once dwelt.*" Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man, to shew the divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity, to proclaim he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour; the golden candlestick is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness; the sacred incense, which sent rolling up in clouds its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous, hellish vapour, and here is, "instead of a sweet savour, a stench." The comely order of this house is turned all into confusion; "the beauties of holiness" into noisome impurities; the "house of prayer into a den of thieves," and that of the worst and most horrid kind; for every lust is a thief, and every theft sacrilege: continual rapine and robbery are committed upon holy things. The noble powers which were designed and dedicated to divine contemplation and delight, are alienated to the service of the most despicable idols, and employed unto vilest intuitions and embraces; to behold and admire lying vanities, to indulge and cherish lust and wickedness. What! have not the enemies done wickedly in the sanctuary? How have they broken down the carved work thereof, and that too with axes and hammers, the noise whereof was not to be heard in building, much less in the demolishing this sacred frame! Look upon the fragments of that curious sculpture which once adorned the palace of that great king; the relics of common notions; the lively prints of some undefaced truth; the fair ideas of things; the yet legible precepts that relate to practice. Behold! with what accuracy the broken pieces shew these to have been engraven by the finger of God, and how they now lie torn and scattered, one in this dark corner, another in that, buried in heaps of dirt and rubbish! There is not now a system, an entire table of coherent truths to be found, or a frame of holiness, but some

shivered parcels. And if any, with great toil and labour, apply themselves to draw out here one piece, and there another, and set them together, they serve rather to shew how exquisite the divine workmanship was in the original composition, than for present use to the excellent purposes for which the whole was first designed. Some pieces agree, and own one another; but how soon are our inquiries and endeavours non-plussed and superseded! How many attempts have been made, since that fearful fall and ruin of this fabric, to compose again the truths of so many several kinds into their distinct orders, and make up frames of science, or useful knowledge; and after so many ages, nothing is finished in any one kind! Sometimes truths are misplaced, and what belongs to one kind, is transferred to another, where it will not fitly match: sometimes falsehood inserted, which shatters or disturbs the whole frame. And what is with much fruitless pains done by one hand, is dashed in pieces by another; and it is the work of a following age to sweep away the fine-spun cobwebs of a former. And those truths which are of greatest use, though not most out of sight, are least regarded: their tendency and design are overlooked; or they are so loosened and torn off, that they cannot be wrought in, so as to take hold of the soul, but hover as faint ineffectual notions, that signify nothing. Its very fundamental powers are shaken and disjointed, and their order towards one another confounded and broken: so that what is judged considerable is not considered, what is recommended as eligible and lovely is not loved and chosen. Yea, the truth which is after godliness is not so much disbelieved, as hated, held in unrighteousness; and shines as too feeble a light in that malignant darkness which comprehends it not. You come, amidst all this confusion, as into the ruined palace of some great prince, in which you see here the fragments of a noble pillar, there the shattered pieces of some curious imagery, and all lying neglected and useless among heaps of dirt. He that invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you but such another prospect, and doth but say to you,—"Behold the desolation;" all things rude and waste. So that should there be any pretence to the divine presence, it might be said, If God be here, why is it thus? The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly shew the great Inhabitant is gone.

(2.) And what was so manifest a sign of God's absence, was also a most righteous cause: for who have committed these

great wastes, and made this temple uninhabitable, but men themselves? And what could be more injurious to the holy God, than to invade and profane his temple? Or for what could we suppose him to shew more jealousy and concern? Whoever were a God, one would expect he should plead for himself, when men have cast down his altar. No words can express the greatness of the indignity! For do but take the following state of the case, thus: Man was his own creature, raised out of nothing by his mighty and most arbitrary hand; it was in his power and choice, whether ever he should have being, any, or none, another, or this, of so noble an order and kind. The designation was most apt, of so excellent a creature to this office and use, to be immediately sacred to himself, and his own converse; his temple and habitation, the mansion and residence of his presence and indwelling glory! There was nothing whereto he was herein designed, whereof his nature was not capable. His soul was after the required manner, receptive of a Deity; its powers were competent to their appointed work and employment; it could entertain God by knowledge and contemplation of his glorious excellencies, by reverence and love, by adoration and praise. This was the highest kind of dignity whereto created nature could be raised, the most honourable state. How high and quick an advance! This moment, nothing, the next, a being capable and full of God!

It was a most delectable and pleasant state, to be separated to the entertainment of the divine presence; that as soon as man could first open his eyes, and behold the light and glory of this new-made world, the great Lord and Author of it should present himself, and say, "Thou shalt be mine." How grateful a welcome into being! "Thee, above all my works, which thou beholdest, I choose out for myself. Thine employment shall be no laborious, painful drudgery; unless it can be painful to receive the large communications of immense goodness, light, life, and love, that shall, of their own accord, be perpetually flowing in upon thee! Whatsoever thou espiest besides, that is even most excellent and pleasant to thy sense, is yet inferior to thee, and insufficient for thy satisfaction and highest delight, and but the faint shadow of that substantial fulness, which I myself will be unto thee."

There was, in all this, the freest and most condescending vouchsafement; no necessity could urge the self-sufficient Good to affect union and familiarity with its own creature. Man's alienation of himself from God, was as entirely volun-

tary, nothing could force him to it; he could have no inducement, which it was not easy to resist; heaven and earth could not afford the matter of a regardable temptation, to withdraw him from what did so infinitely excel. But how mean things have become the tempting and prevailing objects! the momentary relishes of a merely sensual delight, that might have been had innocent and pure, without breaking the enclosure. Ravenous appetite, lust after forbidden pleasure, is impatient of restraint: reason, that should have restrained it, resigns its office, falls into a treacherous combination with usurping sense, chooses rather to obey than rule, to rebel than obey; for not to rule, being thereto enjoined by the supreme Ruler, was to rebel. The empire of rebellious appetite was reckoned more tolerable than God's: thus are his authority affronted and his goodness despised both at once. He is rejected both as ruler and benefactor, with equal disrespect to his majesty and grace, to his governing and his heart-delighting presence. And how ignominious, hereupon, is the rejection, when so vile things are chosen and preferred! The tyranny of lust, before his holy, reasonable, orderly government; the pleasures of sin, rather than those of the divine presence: this being the practical, decisive judgment given in the case, that these are better. It is better to be the meanest drudge and slave than his servant, and to feed upon husks or ashes than his pure and most satisfying communications. And what he chose to be, he is; that is, with the indignity done to God, he hath joined the vilest debasement of himself. For hence also, how loathsome a creature is he now become! How perverted in all his powers! How full of darkness, confusion, impurity, malignity, and venom! How universally and horridly deformed! And hereof an estimate may be made, from his unaptness to self-reflection; which how notorious is it! What doth he not rather choose to do with his thoughts, than turn them inward? And how unfit is he for divine converse, that cannot endure his own; or to associate with God, that is become too foul a creature to have any satisfying converse with himself! Now what could be expected to ensue upon all this, but that he should be forsaken of God; that the blessed presence be withdrawn, that had been so despitefully slighted, to return no more? No more, until at least a recompense should be made him for the wrong done, and a capacity be recovered for his future converse: namely, until both his honour should be repaired, and his temple; until he might again honourably return, and be fitly received. But who

could have thought in what way these things should ever be brought to pass? that is, neither could his departure but be expected, nor his return but be above all expectation. To depart was what became him; a thing, as the case was, most God-like, or worthy of God, and what he owed to himself. It was meet so great a Majesty, having been so condescendingly gracious, should not be also cheap, or appear unapprehensive of being neglected and set at nought. It became him, as the self-sufficient Being, to let it be seen he designed not man his temple for want of a house; that having of old inhabited his own eternity, and having now the heavens for his throne, the earth his footstool, he could dwell alone, or where he pleased else, in all his great creation; and did not need, where he was not desired. That of the Cynic was thought a brave saying, when his malecontented servant turned fugitive, and left him—"It were an unworthy thing Manes should think he can live without Diogenes, and that Diogenes cannot without Manes." (Senec. de Tranquill.) How much better would it suit with the real self-fulness of a Deity, where nothing of this kind can look like an empty, hollow boast! It was becoming of his pure and glorious holiness, not to dwell amidst impurities, or let it be thought he was a God that took pleasure in wickedness; and most suitable to his equal justice to let them who said to him, "Depart from us," feel they spake that word against their own life and soul; and that what was their rash and wilful choice, is their heaviest doom and punishment. It was only strange, that when he left his temple he did not consume it; and that not leaving it without being basely expelled, he hath thought of returning without being invited back again. Yea, and that whatsoever was necessary thereto, is designed by his own so strange contrivance, and done at his own so dear expense: his only-begotten Son most freely consenting with him, and in sundry capacities sustaining the weight and burthen of this great undertaking. This leads us to the third thing proposed, which will be considered in the following chapter.

CHAP. V.

I. The restitution of this temple undertaken by the Immanuel. II. The subject of the preceding chapter continued, wherein is shewn, *Thirdly*, That the blessed God hath laid the platform and foundations of his present temple in Immanuel; which was first more darkly prefigured, and afterwards more clearly revealed: he was himself to be the platform, the foundation, and the founder of it; and in order hereto must also be a sacrifice. III. The subject more particularly considered, wherein is shewn the sufficiency and the necessity of this constitution of Immanuel, for this purpose. *First*, Its sufficiency; in which it is proved, 1. That we have enough in him, whereupon God might express himself willing to rebuild and return to his former temple. This founded on his sacrifice: objections to his sacrifice answered. 2. That man be made willing to render it back to him, and admit the operation of his fashioning hand. To effect this purpose, it is shewn, (1.) That on account of his sacrifice, he hath the power of giving the Holy Spirit. (2.) That the unwillingness of man is to be overcome by the power and spirit of Immanuel, as hereafter to be more fully shewn: but working (suitably to an intelligent subject) in a rational way. (3.) In this there is a great accommodateness in the constitution of Immanuel, as demonstrating, [1.] Divine love. [2.] Divine holiness: and those, (1.) In the possibility of attaining them. (2.) In their own native loveliness. *Secondly*, The necessity of this constitution of Immanuel for this purpose.

I. AND indeed, what was to be designed and done, did every way call for so great an undertaker.—The indignity offered to the majesty of the most high God, in his so ignominious expulsion from his own temple, was to be recompensed;—and the ruin must be repaired which had befallen his temple itself. In reference to both these performances, it was determined that Immanuel, that is, his own Son, his substantial Image, the Brightness of his glory, the eternal Word, should become incarnate; and being so, should undertake several parts, and in distinct capacities, and be at once a single Temple himself, and that this temple should be also a sacrifice, and thereby give rise to a manifold temple conformed to that original one, of each whereof, in the virtue of that sacrifice, he was himself to be the glorious Pattern, the firm Foundation, the magnificent Founder, and the most curious Architect and Former, by his own various and most peculiar influence.

This hath been the result of the divine counsel, and the Lord's own doing, most justly marvellous in our eyes.

II. This leads us to the last thing proposed in the method in the preceding chapter; and to consider,

Thirdly, That the blessed God hath laid the platform and the foundations of his temple, as it was to be restored and set up again among men, in and by that great Immanuel, his own Son made flesh. It is to be considered that (as hath been shewn) the world had a long time lain deluged with wickedness, sunk in sensuality, and a deep oblivion of God; his memorial was even lost among men, and nothing less thought of than a temple in the true design and meaning of it; the notices of God, and any inclination to religion that remained, (too deeply infixed into the mind and nature of men to be quite extinct,) were yet so faint and weak, carnal and terrene propensions so strong, that the vital religion which was the proper business of a living temple, could have no place. It was not so only in the Pagan world from which God had further withdrawn himself, but even with that select people to whom he vouchsafed more peculiar manifestations and symbols of his mind and presence.

They had a *figurative temple* by his own appointment, erected in much glory among them, that might have instructed them, and by degrees the rest of the world, if they would have understood its true meaning and signification, that God was yet willing to dwell with men on earth, and that it should be a "house of prayer for all nations," who ought, upon those glorious appearances of God among that people, to have gradually proselyted themselves unto them. It prefigured what he intended, namely, in his appointed season, by his own Son to descend and inhabit, make and constitute him a much more glorious temple than could be built of wood or stone, or by the hands of men: that in after time "Shiloh should come, unto whom the gathering of the people should be," and by whom he would reconcile and re-collect the apostate world back again to himself. But all this was as unintelligible mystery on all hands; entered not into the minds of men of either sort, but much less into their hearts; and the Jews did much more affect to paganize, and go further off from God, than the Pagans (which in this they ought) to judaize, and draw nearer to him. The natural sentiments of religion, which were common to all men, did run out only into mere external observances and empty (though somewhat different) formalities, that might well enough agree with a sen-

sual life, transacted in habitual estrangement from God, and as without him in the world; so as not only not to answer the true intent and use of a temple, but to frustrate and elude it.

When this was the state of things with this world, and the fulness of time was now come, wherein God intended, with more vigour and efficacy, to renew and reinforce his mighty and merciful work of setting up his temple, and to make it rise in splendour and glory in the world, he at length sends down his Son: he puts on man; becomes Immanuel; an incarnate God among men; and a Man inhabited by all the fulness of God. This man was, therefore, a most perfect Temple; the *original one*: that is, not only a single one himself, but an exemplary Temple, to which all other were to be conformed; the advantage whereof to the forming of more we shall see hereafter: whereby he was also a *virtual one*, from which life and influence were to be transfused to raise and form all others. But in order to its being so, this very temple must become a sacrifice; and by dying, multiply: a seminal temple, as we shall hereafter shew, and as he himself represents the matter, John 12. 24. And which is in the full sense of it said, 1 Peter 2. where, when we were first told, (*v.* 4, 5.) we must come to him as unto a living stone, and as lively stones be built up a spiritual house; we are further told, (*v.* 24.) that he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, (where he was offered as a sacrifice,) that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For now, a temple being, in its proper use and design, intended for divine honour, could not have its foundation in the ruin thereof, or be built upon his unremedied dishonour: the Son of God, by tendering himself for a valuable recompense, must be the Corner-stone of this new building. The wrong that man had done to the divine majesty should be expiated by none but man, and could be by none but God. Behold then the wonderful conjunction of both in the one Immanuel! who was, by his very constitution, an *actual Temple*: "God with us:" the habitation of the Deity returned, and resettling itself with men: and fitted to be (what it must be also) a most acceptable sacrifice. For here were met together man that could die, and God that could overcome death; man, that might suffer, and God, that could give sufficient value to those sufferings; sufficient to atone the offended Majesty, and procure that life might be diffused, and spread itself to all that should unite with him; whereby they might become living stones, joined to that living Corner-stone;

a spiritual temple, again capable of that divine presence which they had forfeited, and whereof they were forsaken.

III. That all this may be the better understood, we shall endeavour to shew, more distinctly, the *sufficiency* and aptness of the constitution and appointment of Immanuel, (considering what he was, and what was undertaken to be suffered and performed by him,) as the most proper and adequate means for the restoring of God's temple with men; and the *necessity* of this course for this end.

First, And for the aptness and *sufficiency* of this course, or what the setting up of Immanuel might do for this purpose, may be seen in the suitableness hereof to the foregoing state of the case, and by comparing therewith what he is, and hath done and suffered in order hereto. We have seen that the former desolate state of this temple was occasioned and inferred by man's apostasy, (whereby he became incapable of serving any longer the purposes of a temple,) and God's departure thereupon. There was therefore the concurrence of somewhat on man's part, and somewhat on God's, unto this desolation: on man's, what was unjust, leading, and causal; on God's, what was most just, consequent, and caused thereby: man's unrighteous and ill-deserving aversion from God, and God's most righteous and deserved aversion hereupon from him: the one caused by the other, but both causing in different kinds the vacancy and deserted state of this temple which ensued; the former as a sinning cause, the latter as a punishing. Now what we have considerable in the Immanuel towards the restoration of this temple, and that it might become again habitable and replenished by the Divine Presence as before, is answerable to this state of the case; and directly tending to compose things between the distanced parties, both on the one part and the other. And because God was to have the first and leading part in reconciliations, as man hath in disagreements, we have enough in him, whereupon—God might express himself willing to rebuild and return to his former dwelling;—and man be willing to render it back to him, and admit the operation of the fashioning hand whereby it is to be prepared and refitted for its proper use.

1. That God might rebuild and return to his former temple. This is effected; and a foundation is laid for the effecting of the other too, in his becoming *a sacrifice* to justice; a sacrifice so rich and fragrant, so full of value and grateful savour, as that abundant recompense is made by it for the

wrong man had done to the Majesty of heaven, by profaning and polluting this temple, and expelling so contumeliously its great Inhabitant:—an injury, to which the creation, consuming in a universal flame, had been an unproportionable sacrifice: but the sacrifice of himself, the Immanuel, God-Man, could be defective in nothing; was both suitable and equal to the exigency of the case. For the sacrifice of him who was man, was suitable to the offence of man; and of him who was God, was equal to the wrong done to God. Long before this sacrifice was offered, the expectation of it, and since, the remembrance, have been precious. It was of sufficient virtue to work and diffuse its influence at the greatest distance; and not of time only, but of place too: to perfume the world, and scatter blessings through all the parts and nations of it, as well as through all the ages. When no other sacrifice or offerings could avail any thing, (Ps. 40. Heb. 10.) lo! He comes into a body prepared on purpose: which, though it was not formed and assumed until the fulness of time, (Gal. 4. 4.) was yet reckoned as slain from the beginning of it, Rev. 13. 8. This was the seed in which, though it sprung up only in Judea, yet all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Gen. 22. 18. Long was this body in preparing, and the seed transmitted through many generations, whence it was at length to arise; into which as its last preparation, the Deity descended; and that it might be a sufficiently costly sacrifice, filled it with the divine fulness; for in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. 2. 9. When we read Abel's sacrifice to have been more excellent than Cain's, (Heb. 11. 4.) the Greek word is, it was *fuller*. How full a one was this! That was filled by faith with a derivative fulness; this, immediately by God himself, with his own self-fulness, which filleth all in all, and whence all must receive.

Being so filled, it was a temple, and must now further be a sacrifice. Both are signified in that one short passage, which himself let fall, (John 2. 19.) "Destroy this temple:" that is, that he was a Temple, and was to be destroyed; which is carried in the notion of a sacrifice. This he said of his body, v. 21. Strange mystery! The very temple itself a consuming oblation, self-devoted even to destruction, and out of that again self-raised! The divine justice could not hereby but be well satisfied, and say, It was enough, when the whole temple became all propitiatory, and the profanation of the former temple was expiated by the immolation of the new: so that, in point of honour and justice, no exception could now lie

against the return of the divine presence to its wasted and forsaken temple. Only his return could not, as yet, be presently to dwell there, (for it was most unfit,) but to refit and prepare it for his future dwelling. It had been long desolate, and hereby was become decayed and ruinous, full of noisome impurities: yea, the habitation of dragons and devils of Ziim, and Jiim, and Ochim. Many an abominable idol was set up here, that filled up the room of the one God that had forsaken and left it. It was wholly in the possession of false gods, for whose use it was the more fit, by how much it was the less fit for his; for amidst darkness, confusion, and filthiness, was the chosen seat of the principalities and powers that now did dwell and rule here. Here was the throne of the prince of darkness, the resort of his associates, the altars of as many lusts as the heart of man, now wholly given up to all manner of wickedness, could multiply unto itself; by whose consent and choice, this horrid alienation had been made and continued. Upon such terms the "strong man armed kept the house."

The blessed God might now return, but he must build before he dwell, and conquer before he build. He might return, but not upon other terms than the expiatory value, and actual or ascertained oblation of that above-mentioned sacrifice: for when he forsook this his temple, he left it with just resentment, and his most righteous curse upon it—a curse that was of this import, "Never any thing holy or pure any more come here, or any thing good and pleasant. The light of the sun never shine any more at all on thee: the voice of joy and gladness never be heard any more at all in thee." The powerful horror of this curse held it doomed to all the desolation and misery that were upon it; confirmed it in the power of him that ruled here, at his will. Hence, had the magic and charms of the evil one, their permitted, unresisted efficacy, rendered it an enchanted place; related and adjoined it to the nether world, the infernal region; made it the next neighbourhood, even of the very suburbs of hell; and barred out all divine light and grace, all heavenly beams and influences from it. So that, had it not been for this Sacrifice, this temple had been and remained, even in the same kind, an accursed place, as hell itself: the Spirit of God should have had no more to do here, than there; for so the sentence and curse of his violated law had determined: "Thou shalt die the death," did say no less.

But now, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the

law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal. 3. He was made a curse for us; not the same in kind which we had incurred, (which it were horrid to think,) but such as his state could admit, and ours could require. For that a person so immutably pure and holy should become an impure thing, was what his state could not admit; and that one of so high dignity should willingly suffer to that degree which he did for us, was a thing of so great merit and value, as to answer the uttermost of our ill-deservings; than which the exigency of our case could not, in that respect, call for more. And the end or design of his becoming to that degree a curse for us, being expressly said to be this, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, (or the promised Spirit,) implies, that the curse upon us had intercepted and cut off from us all influences of that holy blessed Spirit; for the fresh emission whereof, in God's own stated method, he had now again opened the way. That this blessing is hereby said to become the portion of the Gentiles, was enough to the apostle's present purpose, writing to the Galatians; the Jews having, upon the same terms, had the same privilege formerly from age to age: "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them;" (Nehem. 9. 20.) which also is implied in their being charged with vexing and rejecting this blessed Spirit, one generation after another, Isa. 63. 10. Acts 7. 51. And they had now the same gospel, and are here also included, in that it is said to be the blessing of Abraham; into the communion whereof the Gentiles are now declared to have been admitted, about which so great doubt had been in those days. That therefore the Spirit might be given for the mentioned purpose, on the account of the Son of God's oblation of himself, is out of question. The *necessity* that he should be *only* given on *these terms*, will be seen hereafter, in its proper place, in ch. 9.

But whereas it hath been designed in all this discourse to represent the constitution of Immanuel (being first made a personal Temple, then a Sacrifice) as an apt and fit means to multiply this one temple into many, and bring it about, that upon just and honourable terms God might again return to inhabit the souls of men: it may perhaps be alleged, by some,—That it seems an unrighteous thing God should appoint his own innocent Son to be punished for the sins of offending creatures, and let them escape. And then how could an unjust

act make for the honour of his justice, or that which was in itself unfit, be a fit means to any good end?—The loud clamours wherewith some later contenders have filled the Christian world upon this subject, make it fit to say somewhat of it; and the thing itself needs not that we say much. We do know that the innocent Son of God was crucified; we know it by God's determinate counsel; we know it was for the sins of men; (which the adversaries, in a laxer and less significant sense, deny not, though it must by no means be understood, say they, as a punishment of those sins:) we know many of those sinners do finally escape deserved punishment. The truth of these things, in fact, is disputed on neither side: all these then are acknowledged reconcileable and consistent with the justice of God. What then is to be inferred? Not that these things are not so, for that they are, is acknowledged on all hands. What then? That God is unjust? Will their zeal for the reputation of God's justice admit of this? No; but it is only unjust to count this suffering of his Son a punishment: that is, it is unjust he should suffer for a valuable and necessary purpose; not that he should suffer needlessly, or for no purpose that might not have been served without it! But why may not the sufferings of Christ be looked on as a punishment? Because they will have it be essential to punishment, that it be inflicted on the person that offended: and then inconsistent with its notion and essence, that it be inflicted on an innocent person. But if so, the pretence for the cry of injustice vanishes, unless they will be so absurd as to say, It is very just to afflict an innocent person, but not to punish him; when the punishment hath no more in it of real evil to him that suffers it, than the admitted affliction. And when they say, The very notion of punishment carries in it an essential respect to that personal guilt of him that bears it, it implies that in the present case punishment hath no place, not because it is unjust, but because it is impossible. In the mean time, how vain and ludicrous is that pretence, that all the real evil which God determined should befal his Son he should let come upon him with acknowledged justice, but that the injustice must lie only in a notion; that is, if he look upon it as a punishment. Yet also the punishing of one for another's offence is forbidden to men, as themselves allege from Deut. 24. 16. (as it is not strange God should disallow men that dominion over one another, which he may claim to himself, and which he is in no such possibility to abuse as they,) which therefore shews their notion of punishment is false, by which they

would make it impossible for one man to be punished for another's faults, (as the learned Grotius acutely argues, *De Satisfact.*) inasmuch as it were absurd to forbid a thing that is impossible. And that God himself doth often punish the sins of some upon others, is evident enough from many places of holy Scripture; particularly the second commandment, (Exod. 20. 5.) "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children," &c. 2 Sam. 24. 15, &c. 1 Kings 14. Lam. 5. 7. Whereas therefore they are wont, on the contrary, to allege that of Ezek. 18. "Ye shall no more use this proverb, The fathers have eaten the sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," *v.* 2, 3. and 19, 20, &c. It is plain, in that it is said, Ye shall no more, &c. that the blessed God speaks here of what, in merciful indulgence, he for the future would not do, not of what in strict justice he might not; for can it be supposed he owns himself to have dealt unjustly with them before?

It is evidently therefore neither impossible nor unjust to punish one for another's offence; and the matter only seems harsh, to such as have misshapen to themselves the notion of punishment, and make it only correspond to the appetite of private revenge: whereas it only answers to a just will of vindicating the rights and honour of government; which may most fitly be done, upon another than the offender, not at random, or in an undistinguishing promiscuous hurry, but upon the two suppositions mentioned by the above-recited author. First, If there be a near conjunction between the person punished, with the person offending. Secondly, If there be a consent and voluntary suseeption of the former on behalf of the other. And we add, as a third, Especially if there be thereupon a legal substitution, the supreme ruler upon that consent also agreeing, providing, by a special law made in the case, for such transferring of the guilt and punishment. All which have so eminently concurred in the present case, that it can proceed from nothing but a disposition to cavil, further to insist and contend about it. And we know that such translations have among men not only been esteemed just, but laudable; as in the known story of Zaleucus, who, having ordained that adultery among his Locricas should be punished with the loss of both eyes, and his own son afterwards being found guilty of that crime, was content to lose one of his own eyes, that justice might be done to the public constitution, and mercy be shewn to his son in saving one of his: and that of the Pythagoreans, Damon and Pythias, the one of whom pawned his own life to

the tyrant, to procure time for the other (condemned to die) wherein to settle some affairs abroad before his death; who returning within the limited time to save his faith and his friend's life, by surrendering his own, so moved the tyrant, that he spared both. The common case of man, forsaken of the divine presence, and not to be restored without recompense, was the most deplorable and the most important that could be thought. And it may now be compassionately cared for; this having been obtained by this great sacrifice, that the divine justice is so well satisfied, and his majesty and honour so fully asserted and vindicated, as that he now may, without wrong to himself, (his justice and the dignity of his government not reclaiming against it,) cast a compassionate and favourable eye upon the desolations of his temple; take up kind thoughts towards it; send forth his mightier Spirit to dispossess the "strong man armed," to vanquish the combined enemy-powers, to build and cleanse and beautify the habitation of his holiness, and then inhabit and dwell in it: upon which account it is now called, the temple of the Holy Ghost; the Spirit which the Father sends, in the name of the Son, upon this errand; he having obtained that it should be sent. By which Spirit also the Immanuel was sufficiently enabled to gain our consent unto all this; for his dying on the cross was not that he might have the Spirit in himself, but that he might have the power of communicating it: and so (as was before intimated) might the foundation be laid for what is to be done on our part, by the offering of this sacrifice; of which we are next further to treat.

2. That which was to be done on *our* part, in order to the restoring of God's temple in us, was, that we be made *willing* of his return, and that there be wrought in us whatsoever might tend to make us fitly capable of so great a presence. More needs not to be said (but much more easily might) to shew that we were most *unwilling*. And that our becoming willing was requisite, is sufficiently evident. For what sort of a temple are we to be? Not of wood and stone; but as our worship must be all reasonable service, of the same constitution must the temple be whence it is to proceed. We are to be temples, by self-dedication, separating ourselves unto that purpose; and are to be the voluntary under-labourers in the work that is to be done for the preparing of this temple for its proper use: and the use which is to be made of it, that there the blessed God and we might amicably and with delight converse together, supposes our continual willingness, which therefore

must be once obtained. Now unto this purpose also, the constitution of Immanuel was most suitable; or the setting up of this one eminent temple first, *God in Christ*. This was a leading case, and had a further design: it was never meant that the divine presence should be confined to that one single Person, or only that God should have a temple on earth as long as the Man Christ should reside there; but he was to be the *primary original Temple;* and his being so, did contribute to the making us willing to become his temples also.

(1.) As here was the fulness of that Spirit, by whose power and influence that, and all the subsequent work, was to be wrought in us: which fulness is by that blessed name, IMMANUEL, signified to be in him on purpose to be *communicated*, or as what must be some way common unto God with us. Our aversion was not easily vincible: the people, it was said, (speaking of the reign of Immanuel,) should be willing in the day of his power; (Ps. 110. 3.) and, as it follows, in the beauties of holiness. This was a known name of God's temple, (1 Chr. 16. 29.) for the building whereof David was now preparing, and whereto the passages agree, Ps. 27. 4. Ps. 96. 8, 9. And that spiritual one whereof we speak must be here chiefly meant, whereof the Christian world, in its exterior frame, is but the outer court; or is subordinate to the interior frame, and to the work thereof, but as scaffolds to the building which they inclose. The people shall be *willing*, but not otherwise than being made so by *his power;* and that not always put forth, but in the *day* of his power; on a noted memorable day; a day intended for the demonstration and magnifying of his power; that is, the season when Immanuel (the Lord, to whom the speech is addressed) would apply and set himself, even with his might, to the great work of restoring and raising up the temple of God: a work not to be done by might and power, (according to the common, vulgar notion thereof, by which nothing is reckoned might and power but a visible arm of flesh, hosts and armies, horses and chariots,) but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts, Zech. 4. Then, though the spirits of men swell as mountains, in proud enmity and opposition, (which must be levelled where this building is designed,) those mountains shall appear bubbles: what are they before this great Undertaker? They shall become a plain, when the Head-stone is brought forth with shoutings, unto which the cry shall be, Grace, grace. This is the Stone laid in Zion for a foundation, (Isa. 28.) sure and tried, elect and precious; (Ps. 118.) disallowed by men, but chosen of God;

the chief Stone of the corner; (1 Peter 2.) a living, spiritnous Stone, from which is a mighty effluence of life and spirit, all to attract and animate other stones, and draw them into union with itself, so as to compact and raise up this admirable fabric, a spiritual house for "spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:" as a Stone that shall spread life through the whole frame: called therefore a Branch (Zech. 3. 8, 9.) as well as a Stone, whereto is attributed the work and the glory of building God's temple. "Behold the Man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory," &c. ch. 6. A plain indication, that the prophecies of that book did not ultimately terminate in the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem; but, more mystically, intended the great comprehensive temple of the living God, which the Messiah should extend and diffuse, by a mighty communication of his Spirit, through the world; when (as is afterwards said, v. 15.) "they that are afar off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord;" "and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Many people and strong nations," &c. (ch. 8. 20—22.) Ten men out of all languages to one Jew, that shal say, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. See Mic. 4. 2. This, it is said, shall be at Jerusalem, but it must be principally meant of the New Jerusalem, that cometh down from heaven, that is from above, that is free with her children, and is the mother of us all. And how plentiful an effusion of Spirit! how mighty and general an attraction, by it, is signified in all this, by which so deeply rooted an aversion to God and serious living religion, as is known to be common to men, is overcome, and turned into willingness and inclination towards him! And whereby that great primary Temple, CHRIST replenished with the divine fulness, multiplies itself into so many, or enlarges itself into that one, his church; called also his body, (as both his very body and that church are called his temple,) the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Nor needs it scruple us, or give us any trouble, that we find this name of a temple placed upon a good man singly and alone, sometimes upon the whole community of such together. Each one bears a double habitude—direct towards God, by which he is capable of being his private mansion; collateral towards our fellow Christians, whereby he is a part of his more enlarged dwelling. When-

soever then any accession is made to this spiritual temple, begun in Christ himself, it is done by a further diffusion of that Spirit, whereof that *original Temple* is the first receptacle.

(2.) But moreover, because it was a *rational subject* that was to be wrought upon, it is also to be expected that the work itself be done in a *rational way*. These that must be made living, and that were before intelligent stones, were not to be hewed, squared, polished, and moved to and fro by a violent hand; but being to be rendered willing, must be dealt with in a way suitable to the effect to be wrought. They are themselves to come as lively stones, to the living Corner-stone, by a vital act of their own will; which, we know, is not to be moved by force, but rational allurement. Wherefore this being the thing to be brought about, it is not enough to inquire or understand by what power, but one would also covet to know by what motive or inducement is this willingness and vital co-operation brought to pass; and we shall find this *original Temple*, the Immanuel, had not only in it a spring of sufficient power, but also,

(3.) In its constitution a great accommodateness thereto; carrying with it enough of argument and rational inducement, whereby to persuade and overcome our wills into a cheerful compliance and consent. And that,

[1.] As it was itself the most significant demonstration of *divine love*, than which nothing is more apt to move and work upon the spirit of man. The bonds of love are the cords of a man, (Hos. 11. 4.) of an attractive power, most peculiarly suitable to human nature: We love him, because he first loved us. 1 John 4. This is rational magnetism. When in the whole sphere of beings we have so numerous instances of things that propagate themselves, and beget their like, can we suppose the divine love to be only barren and destitute of this power? And we find, among those that are born of God, there is nothing more eminently conspicuous, in this production, than love. This new creature were otherwise a dead creature. This is its very heart, life, and soul; that which acts and moves it towards God, and is the spring of all holy operations. Since then love is found in it, and is so eminent a part of its composition, what should be the parent of this love, but love? Nor is this a blind or unintelligent production, in respect of the manner of it, either on the part of that which begets, or of that which is begotten: not only he who is propagating his own love, designs it, and knows what he is

about, but he that is hereby made to love, knows whereto he is to be formed, and receives, through an enlightened mind, the very principle, power, and spirit of love. Is his love the cause of ours; or do we love him, because he loved us first? And what sort of cause is it? or how doth it work its effect, otherwise than as his love, testifying and expressing itself, lets us see how reasonable and congruous it is, that we should love back again? As is more than intimated, by the same sacred writer, in that epistle: "Hereby perceive we the love of God," &c. ch. 3. 16. Somewhat or other must first render his love perceivable to us, that thereby we may be induced to love him for his own, and our brother for his sake. And again, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love," &c. After which it shortly follows, "We love him, because he loved us first;" as if he should say, The way of God's bringing us to that love-union with himself, that we by love dwell in him, and he in us, is, by his representing himself a Being of love. Until he beget in us that apprehension of himself, and we be brought to know and believe the love that he hath towards us, this is not done. But where have we that representation of God's love towards us, save in Immanuel? This is the sum of the ministry of reconciliation, or, which is all one, of making men love God, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19. This was the very make and frame, the *constitution* and *design*, of the *original Temple*, to be the "Tabernacle of witness;" a visible testimony of the love of God, and of his kind and gracious propensions towards the race of men, however they were become an apostate and degenerous race; to let them see how inclined and willing he was to become acquainted again with them, and that the old intimacy and friendship, long since out-worn, might be renewed. And this gracious inclination was testified, partly by Christ's taking up his abode on earth; or by the erecting of this *original Temple*, by the Word's being made flesh, (John 4.) wherein (as the Greek expresses it, ἐσκήνωσεν) he did *tabernacle* among us. That whereas we did dwell here in earthly tabernacles, (only now destitute and devoid of the divine presence,) he most kindly comes and pitches his tent amongst our tents; sets up his tabernacle by ours, replenished and full of God: so that here the divine glory was familiarly visible, the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, shining with mild and gentle rays, such as should allure, not affright us, nor their terror make us afraid. A vail

is most condescendingly put on, lest majesty should too potently strike disaccustomed and misgiving minds; and what is more terrible of this glory, is allayed by being interwoven with "grace and truth." Upon this account might it now truly be proclaimed, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!" That is performed which once seemed hardly credible, and (when that temple was raised that was intended but for a type and shadow of this) was spoken of with wondering expostulation: "In very deed will God dwell with men on earth!" Whereas it might have been reasonably thought this world should have been for ever forsaken of God, and no appearance of him ever have been seen here, unless with a design of taking vengeance: how unexpected and surprising a thing was this, that in a state of so comfortless darkness and desolation, the "day-spring from on high should visit it," and that God should come down and settle himself in so mean a dwelling, on purpose to seek the acquaintance of his offending, disaffected creatures! But chiefly and more eminently this his gracious inclination was testified,—

By the manner and design of his leaving this his earthly abode, and yielding that his temple to destruction: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up." This being an animated living temple, could not be destroyed without sense of pain, unto which it could not willingly become subject, but upon design; and that could be no other than a design of love. When he could have commanded twelve legions of angels to have been the guardians of this temple, to expose it to the violence of profane and barbarous hands! this could proceed from nothing but love; and greater love could none shew, especially if we consider what was the designed event. This temple was to fall but single, that it might be raised manifold: it was intended (as it came to pass) to be multiplied by being destroyed; as himself elegantly illustrates the matter: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;" (John 12.) which he afterwards expresses without a metaphor. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," signifying, as it follows, the death he should die, "will draw all men unto me."

We will not here insist on what was said before, that hereby the way was opened for the emission of the Spirit, which, when it came forth, performed such wonders in this kind, creating and forming into temples many a disaffected unwilling heart.

Whence it may be seen, that he forsook that his present dwelling; not that he might dwell here no longer, but only to change the manner of his dwelling, and that he might dwell here more to common advantage: the thing he intended, when he came down. He came down, that by dying, and descending low into the lower parts of the earth, he might make way for a glorious ascent; and ascended, that he might fill all things; (Eph. 4.) that he might give gifts to men, even the rebellious also, that he might dwell among them, Ps. 68. Not, I say, to insist on this, which shews the power by which those great effects were wrought, we may also here consider the way wherein they were wrought; that is, by way of representation and demonstration of the divine love to men. How brightly did this shine, in the glorious ruin and fall of this temple! Herein, how did redeeming love triumph! how mightily did it conquer, and slay the enmity that wrought in the minds of men before! Here he overcame by dying, and slew by being slain. Now were his arrows sharp in the hearts of enemies, by which they became subject, Ps. 45. What wounded him, did, by a strong reverberation, wound them back again. How inwardly were thousands of them pierced by the sight of him whom they had pierced! How sharp a sting was in those words, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ!" Acts 2. For it immediately follows, "When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart." They that crucified him, are crucified with him; are now in agonies, and willing to yield to any thing they are required: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He may have temples now, for taking them; the most obdurate hearts are overcome: and what could be so potent an argument? what so accommodate to the nature of man; so irresistible by it? To behold this live-temple of the living God, the sacred habitation of a Deity, full of pure and holy life and vigour, by vital union with the eternal Godhead, voluntarily devoted and made subject to the most painful and ignominious suffering, purposely to make atonement for the offence done by revolted creatures against their rightful Lord! What rocks would not rent at this spectacle? Enough to put the creation (as it did) into a paroxysm, and bring upon it travailing pangs! And how strange if the hearts of men, only next and most closely concerned, should alone be unmoved, and without the sense of such pangs! Well might it be said, "I, if I be lift up, will draw all men," without any such diminishing sense as to mean

by that *all* a very few only; not intending so much by it the effect wrought, (though that also be not inconsiderable,) as the power, or natural aptitude of the cause. As if he should say, This were enough to vanquish and subdue the world, to mollify every heart of man; and to leave the character upon them of most inhuman creatures, and unworthy to be called men, that shall not be drawn. It might be expected, that every one that hath not abandoned humanity, or hath the spirit of a man in him, should be wrought upon by this means: and they cannot but incur most fearful guilt, even all men, who once having notice of this matter, are not effectually wrought upon by it.

Upon which account, the apostle asks the Galatians, (who had not otherwise seen this sight than as the gospel-narrative had represented it to them,) who had bewitched them that they should not obey, before whose eyes Christ had been set forth crucified among them; intimating, that he could not account them less than bewitched, whom the representation of Christ crucified did not captivate into his obedience. And since, in his crucifixion, he was a sacrifice, that is, placatory and reconciling, and that reconciliations are always mutual, of both the contending parties to one another, it must have the proper influence of a sacrifice immediately upon both, and as well mollify men's hearts towards God, as procure that he should express favourable inclinations towards them. That is, that all enmity should cease, and be abolished for ever; that wrongs be forgotten, rights restored, and entire friendship, amity, and free converse, be renewed, and be made perpetual. All which signifies, that by this means the spirits of men be so wrought upon that they render back to God his own temple, most willingly, not merely from an apprehension of his right, but as overcome by his love; and valuing his presence more than their own life. Guilt is very apt to be always jealous. No wonder if the spirits of men, conscious of so great wrong done to God, (and a secret consciousness there may be even where there are not very distinct and explicit reflections upon the case,) be not very easily induced to think God reconcileable. And while he is not thought so, what can be expected but obstinate aversion on their part? For what so hardens as despair? Much indeed might be collected, by deeply-considering minds, of a propension, on God's part, to peace and friendship, from the course of his providence, and present dispensation towards the world; his clemency, long-suffering, and most of all his bounty, towards them. These lead

to repentance in their own natural tendency: yet are they but dull insipid gospel in themselves, to men drowned in sensuality, buried in earthliness, in whom the divine Spirit breathes not, and who have provoked the blessed Spirit to keep at a distance; by having stupified and laid asleep the considering power of their own spirit. Nor are these the usual means, apart and by themselves, which the Spirit of God is wont to work by upon the hearts of men, as experience and observation of the common state of the Pagan world doth sadly testify, and without the concurrence of that blessed Spirit, even the most apt and suitable means avail nothing.

But now where there is so express a testification, as we find in the gospel of Christ, of God's willingness to be reconciled; a proclamation distinctly made, that imports no other thing but glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men; (for confirmation whereof, the Son of God incarnate is represented slain, and offered up a bloody sacrifice; and that we might see at once both that God is reconcileable, by the highest demonstration imaginable, and how or upon what terms he comes to be so:) no place for reasonable doubt any longer remains. We have before our eyes what, by the wonderful strangeness of it, should engage the most stupid minds to consider the matter; what ought to assure the most misgiving, doubtful mind, that God is in good earnest, and intends no mockery or deceit in his offer of peace; and what ought to melt, mollify, and overcome the most obdurate heart. Yea, not only what is in its own nature most apt to work towards the producing these happy effects is here to be found, but wherewith also the Spirit of grace is ready to concur and cowork; it being his pleasure, and most fit and comely in itself, that he should choose to unite and fall in with the aptest means, and apply himself to the spirits of men in a way most suitable to their own natures, and most likely to take and prevail with them: whereupon the gospel is called the "ministration of spirit and life, and the power of God to salvation." But that this gospel, animated by that mighty and good Spirit, hath not universally spread itself over all the world, only its own resolved and resisting wickedness is the faulty cause; otherwise there had been gospel, and temples raised by it, everywhere.

[2.] This *original primary temple* hath matter of rational inducement in it; as it gives us a plain representation of *divine holiness*, brightly shining in human nature. For here was to be seen a most pure, serene, dispassionate mind, un-

polluted by any earthly tincture, inhabiting an earthly tabernacle, like our own. A mind adorned with the most amiable, lovely virtues, faith, patience, temperance, godliness; full of all righteousness, goodness, meekness, mercifulness, sincerity, humility; most abstracted from this world, unmoveably intent upon what had reference to a future state of things, and the affairs of another country; inflexible by the blandishments of sense; not apt to judge by the sight of the eye, or be charmed by what were most grateful to a voluptuous ear; full of pity towards a wretched, sinful world, compassionate to its calamities, unprovoked by its sharpest injuries; bent upon doing the greatest good, and prepared to the suffering of whatsoever evil. Here was presented to common view a life transacted agreeably to such a temper of mind; of one invariable tenor; equal, uniform, never unlike itself, or disagreeing with the exactest or most strict rules. Men might see a God was come down to dwell among them; "The Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person:" a Deity inhabiting human flesh; for such purposes as he came for, could not be supposed to carry any more becoming appearance than he did. Here was, therefore, an *exemplary temple;* the fair and lovely pattern of what we were each of us to be composed and formed unto: imitating us (for sweeter insinuation and allurement) in what was merely natural, and inviting us to imitate him in what was (in a communicable sort) supernatural and divine. Every one knows how great is the power of example, and may collect how apt a method this was to move and draw the spirits of men. Had only precepts and instructions been given men, how they were to prepare and adorn in themselves a temple for the living God, it had, indeed, been a great vouchsafement; but how much had it fallen short of what the present state of man did, in point of means, need, and call for! How great a defalcation were it from the gospel, if we did want the history of the life of Christ! But not only to have been told of what materials the temple of God must consist, but to have seen them composed and put together; to have opportunity of viewing the beautiful frame in every part, and of beholding the lovely, imitable glory of the whole, and which we are to follow, though we cannot with equal steps: how merciful condescension, and how great an advantage, is this unto us! We have here a state of entire devotedness to God (the principal thing in the constitution of his temple) exemplified before our eyes, together with what was most suitable besides to such a state. Do we not see how, in a body of

flesh, one may be subject to the will of God; to count the doing of it our meat and drink? When it imposes any thing grievous to be suffered, to say, "Not my will, but thine be done?" How in all things to seek not our own glory, but his? and not to please ourselves, but him? How hereby to keep his blessed presence with us, and live in his constant converse and fellowship, never to be left alone; but to have him ever with us, as always aiming to do the things that please him? Do we not know how to be tempted, and abstain; injured, and forgive; disobliged, and do good; to live in a tumultuous world, and be at peace within; to dwell on earth, and have our conversation in heaven? We see all this hath been done, and much more than we can here mention: and by so lively a representation of the brightest divine excellencies, beautifying this *original exemplary temple*, we have a two-fold most considerable advantage towards our becoming such; namely, that hereby both the *possibility* and the *loveliness* of a temple (the thing we are now ourselves to design) are here represented to our view: by the former whereof we might be encouraged, by the latter allured, unto imitation; *that* working upon our hope, *this* upon our desire, and love in order hereto.

First, The *possibility*. I mean it not in the strict sense only, as signifying no more than that the thing, simply considered, implies no repugnance in itself, nor is without the reach of absolute omnipotence; for as no one needs to be told that such a thing is (in this sense) possible, so to be told it, would signify little to his encouragement. There are many things in this sense not impossible, whereof no man can, however, have the least rational hope: as, that another world may shortly be made; that he may be a prince, or a great man therein; with a thousand the like. But I mean it of what is possible to divine power, (that is, to the grace and Spirit of God,) now ready to go forth in a way and method of operation already stated and pitched upon for such purposes. For having the representation before our eyes of this *original Temple*, that is, God inhabiting human flesh on earth, we are not merely to consider it as it is in itself, and to look upon it as a strange thing, or as a glorious spectacle, wherein we are no further concerned, than only to look upon it, and take notice that there is or hath been such a thing; but we are to consider how it came to pass, and with what design it was that such a thing should be, and become obvious to our view. Why have we such a sight offered us? or what imports it unto us? And when we have informed ourselves, by taking the account the gospel

gives us of this matter, and viewed the inscription of that great name *Immanuel*, by wonderful contrivance, inwrought into the very constitution of this temple, we shall then find this to be intended for a leading case; and that this temple was meant for a model and platform of that which we ourselves are to become; or, after which the temple of God in us must be composed and formed: and so, that this matter is possible to an ordinate, divine power, even to that mighty Spirit that resides eminently in this temple, on purpose to be transmitted thence to us, for the framing of us to the likeness of it; and so that the thing is not merely possible, but designed also, namely, that as he was, so we might be in this world: (1 John 4.) unto which is necessary our believing intuition towards him, or a fiducial acknowledgment that this Jesus is the Son of God, come down on purpose into human flesh, to bring about a union between God and us; whereupon that union itself ensues: the matter is brought about, we come to dwell in God, and he in us, *v.* 15. And this we collect and conclude from hence, that we find the same Spirit working and breathing in us, which did in him; "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," *v.* 13. And though it was an unmeasured fulness of this Spirit which dwelt in this *primary temple*, yet we are taught and encouraged hence to expect that a sufficient and proportionable measure be imparted to us, that we may appear not altogether unlike or unworthy of him; that this temple and ours are of the same make, and "both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one;" that we so far agree with our original, that he may not be ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. 2. And how aptly doth this tend to excite and raise our hope of some great thing to be effected in this kind in us, when we have the matter thus exemplified already before our eyes, and do behold the exact and perfect model according whereto we ourselves are to be framed. Nor doth that signify a little to the drawing of our wills, or the engaging us to a consent and co-operation, as the under-builders, in the work of this temple. A design that in itself appears advantageous, needs no more to set it on foot, than that it be represented hopeful. No one, that understands any thing of the nature of man, is ignorant of the power of hope. This one engine moves the world, and keeps all men busy. Every one soon finds his present state not perfectly good, and hopes some way to make it better; otherwise, the world were a dull scene. Endeavour would languish, or rather be none at all: for there were no room left for design, or a rational

enterprising of any thing; but a lazy unconcerned trifling, without care which end goes forward, and with an utter indifferency whether to stir or sit still. Men are not, in their other designs, without hope, but their hope is placed upon things of no value; and when they have gained the next thing they hoped for and pursued, they are as far still as they were from what they meant that for. They have obtained their nearer end, but therein mistook their way, which they designed by it, to their further end. When they have attained to be rich, yet they are not happy; perhaps much further from it than before. When they have preyed upon the pleasure they had in chase, they are still unsatisfied; it may be, guilty reflections turn it all to gall and wormwood. Many such disappointments might make them consider, at length, they have been out all this while, and mistaken the whole nature and kind of the good that must make them happy. They may come to think with themselves, Somewhat is surely lacking, not only to our present enjoyment, but to our very design: somewhat it must be without the compass of all our former thoughts, wherein our satisfying good must lie. God may come into their minds; and they may cry out, Oh! that is it; here it was I mistook, and had forgot myself. Man once had a God! and that God had his temple, wherein he resided, and did converse with man: hither he must be invited back. Yea, but his temple lies all in ruin, long ago deserted and disused, forsaken upon provocation, and with just resentment; the ruin to be repaired by no mortal hand; the wrong done to be expiated by no ordinary sacrifice. All this imports nothing but despair. But let now the Immanuel be brought in; this *original Temple* be offered to view, and the design and intent of it be unfolded and laid open, and what a spring of hope is here! Or what can now be wanting to persuade a wretched soul of God's willingness to return? Or, being now sensible of his misery by his absence, to make it willing of his return; yea, and to contribute the utmost endeavour that all things may be prepared and put into due order for his reception? Or if any thing should be still wanting, it is but what may more work upon desire, as well as beget hope: and to this purpose, a narrower view of this *original Temple* also serves; that is, it not only shews the possibility, but gives us opportunity to contemplate,

Secondly, The *loveliness* too of such a temple. For here is the fairest representation that ever this world had, or that could be had, of this most delectable object. The divine holiness

incarnate did never shine so bright. And we may easily apprehend the great advantage of having so lively and perfect a model set before us of what we are to design and aim at. Rules and precepts could never have afforded so full a description, or have furnished us with so perfect an idea. He that goes to build a house, must have the project formed in his mind before; and (as hath been said) he is to make a material house of an immaterial. So here, we may say the real house is to be built out of the mental or notional one. It is true indeed, when we have got into our minds the true and full idea or model of this temple, our greatest difficulty is not yet over: how happy were it, if the rest of our work would as soon be done, and our hearts would presently obey our light! If they were ductile, and easy to yield, and receive the stamp and impression that would correspond to a well enlightened mind; if we could presently become conform and like to the notions we have of what we should be; if on the sudden our spirits did admit the habitual, fixed frame of holiness, whereof we sometimes have the idea framed in our minds, what excellent creatures should we appear! But though to have that model truly formed in our understandings be not sufficient, it is however necessary; and although our main work is not immediately done by it, it can never be done without it. Truth is the means of holiness: "Sanctify them through thy truth," John 17. 17. God hath chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, 2 Thes. 2.13. Therefore it is our great advantage to have the most entire and full notion that may be, of that temper and frame of spirit we should be of. When the charge was given Moses of composing the tabernacle, (that moveable temple,) he had the perfect pattern of it shewn him in the mount. And to receive the very notion aright of this spiritual living temple, requires a some-way prepared mind, purged from vicious prejudice and perverse thoughts, possessed with dislike of our former pollutions and deformities; antecedent whereto is a more general view of that frame whereunto we are to be composed, and then a more distinct representation is consequent thereon. As we find the prophet is directed first to shew the people the house, that they might be ashamed; whereupon it follows, if they be ashamed of all that they have done, then he must shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, Ezek. 43. 10, 11. How much would it conduce to the work and service of God's temple in us, if upon our

having had some general intimation of his gracious propensions towards us, to repair our ruins, and restore our forlorn, decayed state, we begin to lament after him, and conceive inward resentments of the impurities and desolations of our souls: and shall now have the distinct representation set before our eyes, of that glorious workmanship which he means to express in our renovation! How taking and transporting a sight will this be to a soul that is become vile and loathsome in its own eyes, and weary of being as without God in the world! But now, wherein shall he be understood to give us so exact an account of his merciful intendments and design in this matter, as by letting us see how his glory shone in his own incarnate Son, his express Image; and then signifying his pleasure and purpose to have us conformed to the same image. This is his most apt and efficacious method, when he goes about to raise his new creation, and erect his inner temple; (as it was, in some respect, his way, when he made his first great outer temple of the world;) "God, that commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. 4. That glory shines with greatest advantage to our transformation, in the face or aspect of Immanuel. When we set our faces that way, and our eye meets his, we put ourselves into a purposed posture of intuition, and do steadily look to Jesus; "when we, with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. 3. His very Spirit enters with those vital beams; enters at our eye, and is thence transfused through our whole soul.

The seed and generative principle of the new creature is truth; "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, the word of God," 1 Peter 1. 23. We must understand it of practical truth, or that which serves to shew what we are to be and do, (*ch.* 2. 1—4.) in our new and regenerate state. Hereby souls are begotten to God, hereby they live and grow, hereby they come and join as living stones to the living Corner-stone, in the composition of this spiritual house: as we see the series of discourse runs in this context. Now we have this practical truth, not only exhibited in aphorisms and maxims in the word, but we have it exemplified in the life of Christ. And when the great renovating work is to be done, the old man to be put off, the new man to be put on, the spirit of our mind to be renewed, our business is to learn Christ, and the truth as it is in Jesus:

(Eph. 4. 20—24.) so is accomplished the formation of that new man that is after God. And when we become his (second) workmanship, we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works; caught into union with that Spirit, which shewed itself in the whole course of his conversation on earth, and is gradually to work and form us to an imitation of him. Whereunto we are not formed by mere looking on, or by our own contemplation only of his life and actions, on the one hand: (our rigid hardness and stiff aversion to such a temple and course as his was, are not so easily altered and overcome:) nor, on the other hand, is our looking on useless and in vain, as if we were to be formed, like mere stones, into dead unmoving statues, rather than living temples; or as if his Spirit were to do that work upon us, by a violent hand, while we know nothing of the matter, nor any way comply to the design. But the work must be done by the holding up the representation of this *primary temple* before our eyes, animated and replenished with divine life and glory, as our pattern, and the type by which we are to be formed, till our hearts be captivated and won to the love and liking of such a state; that is, to be so united with God, so devoted to him, so stamped and impressed with all imitable Godlike excellencies, as he was: we are to be so enamoured herewith, as to be impatient of remaining what we were before. And such a view contributed directly hereto, and in a way suitable to our natures. Mere transient discourses of virtue and goodness, seem cold and unsavoury things to a soul drenched in sensuality, sunk into deep forgetfulness of God, and filled with aversion to holiness: but the tract and course of a life evenly transacted, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that is throughout uniform, and constantly agreeable to itself, is apt, by often repeated insinuations, (as drops wear stones,) insensibly to recommend itself as amiable, and gain a liking even with them that were most opposite and disaffected. For the nature of man, in its most degenerate state, is not wholly destitute of the notions of virtue and goodness, nor of some faint approbation of them. The names of sincerity, humility, sobriety, meekness, are of better sound and import, even with the worst of men, than of deceit, pride, riot, and wrathfulness: nor are they wont to accuse any for those former things, under their own names. Only when they see the broken and more imperfect appearances of them, and that they are rather offered at than truly and constantly represented in practice; this begets a prejudice, and the pretenders to them become suspected of hypocrisy, or a conceited singularity, and are

not censured as not being grossly evil, but rather that they are not thoroughly good. But when so unexceptionable a course is in constant view as our Saviour's was, this procures, even from the ruder vulgar, an acknowledgment that he doth all things well, and carries that lustre and awful majesty, as to command a veneration and respect; yea, is apt to allure those that more narrowly observe into a real love both of him and his way; especially when it hath such a close and issue, as appear no way unworthy of himself, or his former pretensions. But all being taken together, resolves into the plainest demonstration of most sincere devotedness to God, and good-will to men; upon which the great stress is laid: "And I, if I be lift up, will draw all men unto me." And how great a thing is done towards our entire compliance with the Redeemer's design of making us temples to the living God, as he himself was, when he, under that very notion, appears amiable in our eyes! How natural and easy is imitation unto love! All the powers of the soul are now, in the most natural way, excited and set on work; and we shall not easily be induced to satisfy ourselves, or admit of being at rest, till we attain a state, with the loveliness whereof our hearts are once taken and possessed beforehand. But nothing of all this is said with design, nor hath any tendency, to diminish or detract from that mighty power of the blessed Spirit of God, by whom men become willing of the return of the divine presence into its ancient residence, and, in subordination, active towards it; but rather to magnify the excellency of that wisdom, which conducts all the exertions and operations of that power so suitably to the subject to be wrought upon, and the ends and purposes to be effected thereby.

Upon the whole, the setting up of this *original temple*, inscribed with the great name *Immanuel*, or the whole constitution of *Christ* the Mediator, hath, we see, a very apparent aptitude and rich sufficiency in its kind, to the composing of things between God and men; the replenishing this desolate world with temples again every where, and those with the divine presence; both as there was enough in it to procure remission of sin, enough to procure the emission of the Holy Spirit: an immense fulness both of righteousness and Spirit; of righteousness for the former purpose, and of Spirit for the latter: and both of these, in distinct ways, capable of being imparted; because the power of imparting them was upon such terms obtained, as did satisfy the malediction and curse of the violated law, which must otherwise have everlastingly withheld both

from apostate, offending creatures. It is not the righteousness of God, *as such*, that can make a guilty creature guiltless, (which must rather oblige him still to hold him guilty,) or the Spirit of God, *as such*, that can make him holy. Here is a full fountain, but sealed and shut up; and what are we the better for that? But it is the righteousness and Spirit of *Immanuel, God with us;* of him who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and who was made a curse for us, that we might have the blessing of the promised Spirit: otherwise, there were not in him a sufficiency to answer the exigency of the case; but as the matter is, here is abundant sufficiency in both respects, as we have already seen. And therefore, the only thing that remains to be shewn herein,—is the *necessity* and requisiteness of such means as this, unto this end. For when we take notice of so great and so rare a thing as an Immanuel, set up in the world; and find by this solemn constitution of him, by the condition of his person, his accomplishments, performances, sufferings, acquisitions, the powers and virtues belonging to him, that every thing hath so apt an aspect, and is so accommodate to the restitution of lost man, and of God's temple in and with him; we cannot but confess, here is a contrivance worthy of God, sufficient for its end. So that the work needs not fail of being done, if in this way it prove not to be overdone; or if the apparatus be not greater than was needful for the intended end; or that the same purposes might not have been effected at an easier rate. I design therefore to speak distinctly and severally of the *necessity* of this course, in reference to the remission of sin, and to the emission or communication of the Spirit: and do purposely reserve several things concerning this latter, to be discoursed under this head: after the *necessity* of this same course for the former purpose (wherein the latter also hath its foundation) hath been considered.

CHAP. VI.

I. An objection supposed. II. The subject of the preceding chapter continued: and, *Secondly*, The *necessity* of this constitution of Immanuel to the erecting God's temple in the world. The discoursing of this matter, proper on this occasion. 1. As to God's part herein, it is proposed to shew, (1.) That a recompense was necessary to be made; and, (2.) That it could be made no other way. Towards the evincing the former, [1.] Sundry things are gradually laid down. [2.] The point itself argued, by comparing the injury done to the *divine*, with what we may suppose done to a *human* government, where, First, Repentance not constantly thought a sufficient recompense; otherwise, a penitent delinquent was never to be punished. Secondly, Difference between God's pardon and man's in most usual cases. A comparative view of the curse of the law and the blessing of the gospel. Thirdly, Recompense for wrong done to government, quite another thing from what answers the appetite of private revenge. Fourthly, Expressions that seem to import it in God, how to be understood. Fifthly, Shewn that they import no more than a constant will so far to punish offences, as is necessary for the asserting and preserving the rights and dignity of his government. Sixthly, So much most agreeable, and necessarily belonging to the perfection of the divine nature. Seventhly, And if the justice of a human government requires it, of the divine much more.

I. IT may here perhaps be said, Why might not the matter have been otherwise brought about? Or, might not God of his mere sovereignty have remitted the wrong done to him, without any such atonement; and, upon the same account, have sent forth his Spirit to turn men's hearts? And if that must work by arguments and rational persuasives, were there no others to have been used, sufficient to this purpose, though the Son of God had never become man, or died upon this account? That to use means exceeding the value of the end, may seem as unsuitable to the divine wisdom, as not to have used sufficient. And who can think the concernments of silly worms impossible to be managed, and brought to a fair and happy issue, without so great things as the incarnation and death of God's own Son?

II. The subject of the preceding chapter is therefore continued, in which we proceed to shew, as was promised,

Secondly, The *necessity*, as the case stood, that this course should be taken for this end. No man can here think we mean that the end itself was otherwise necessary, than as the freest love and good-will made it so; but *that* supposed, we are only to evince that this course was the necessary means to attain it. And as to this, if indeed that modesty and reverence were every where to be found, wherewith it would become dim-sighted man to judge of the ways of God, any inquiry of this kind might be forborn; and it would be enough to put us out of doubt, that this was the most equal and fittest way, that we see it is the way which God hath taken. But that cross temper hath found much place in the world, rather to dispute God's methods, than comport with them, in an obedient thankful compliance and subserviency to their intended ends. And how deeply is it to be resented, that so momentous a thing in the religion of Christians, and that above all other should be the subject and incentive of admiring, devout thoughts and affections, should ever have been made intricate and perplexed by disputation! That the food of life should have been filled with thorns and gravel! And what was most apt to beget good blood, and turn all to strength, vigour, and spirit, should be rendered the matter of a disease! This can never enough be taken to heart. What complaints might the tortured, famished church of Christ send up against the ill instruments of so great a mischief! "Lord! we asked bread, and they gave us a stone. They have spoiled the provisions of thy house. Our pleasantest fare, most delicious and strengthening viands, they have made tasteless and unsavoury." What expostulations might it use with them! "Will you not let us live? Can nothing in our religion be so sacred, so important, as to escape your perverting hands?"

The urgency of the case itself permits not that this matter be silently passed over: a living temple needs the apt means of nourishment and growth; and it must be nourished and grow, by what is suitable to its constitution: unto which nothing is more inward, than the laying this "living Corner-stone."

We will acknowledge that the reasons of divers things in God's determinations and appointments may be very deeply hidden, not only from our more easy view, but our most diligent search: where they are, his telling us, the matter is so, or so, is reason enough to us to believe with reverence. But when they offer themselves, we need not be afraid to see them;

and when the matter they concern is brought in question, should be afraid of being so treacherous as not to produce them.

Now that it was requisite this temple should be so founded as hath been said, is a matter not only not repugnant to the common reason of man, but which fairly approves itself thereunto: that is, so far as that though it exceed all human thought, the great Lord of heaven and earth, infinitely injured by the sin of man, should so wonderfully condescend; yet when his good pleasure is plainly expressed, touching the end, that nothing could be so apparently congruous, so worthy of himself, so accommodate to his design, as the way which he hath avowedly taken to bring it about. That it might be brought about, (as in all reconciliations, and as hath been said concerning this,) a compliance was necessary, and a mutual yielding of both the distanced parties; that is, that God consent to return to his desolate temple, and that man consent or be willing he should.

We have shewn that the constitution and use of the original temple, whereof the account hath been given, was sufficient, and aptly conducing unto both. Now being to shew wherein they were also requisite or necessary to the one and the other, we must acknowledge them not alike immediately necessary to each of these; and must therefore divide the things in order whereto this course was taken, and speak of them severally. Nor are they to be so divided, as though the procurement of God's return for his part, and of man's admitting thereof for his part, were throughout to be severally considered; for God's part is larger than man's, and someway runs into it: he is not only to give his own consent, but to gain man's; and besides his own willing return to repossess this his temple, he is to make man willing also: or rather that return or repossession, rightly understood, will be found to include the making of man willing; that is, in that very return and repossession, he is to put forth that measure of power and influence, by which he may be made so. All this is God's part, which he doth graciously undertake, and without which nothing could be effected in this matter. But then because man is to be wrought upon in a way suitable to his reasonable nature, he is to have such things offered to his consideration, as in their own nature tend to persuade him; and which that power and spirit, to be put forth, may use as proper means to that purpose. Now it is man's part to consider such things, and consent thereupon. Our business here, therefore, is to shew how *necessary* the

constitution of Immanuel was, chiefly and principally as to what now appears to be God's part: and afterward, to say somewhat as to our own.—To the former, it was requisite that the *Original Temple*, *Immanuel*, should be set up, and be used to such immediate purposes as have been expressed: to the latter, was requisite the declaration hereof.—To the one, that such a constitution should be; to the other, that it be made known to man.

1. In reference to God, this constitution was necessary, that so there might be a sufficient means for the previous expiation of the offence done to the divine majesty; or that the injurious violation of his sacred rights might be sufficiently recompensed. And here, more particularly, two things are to be cleared; namely, that in order to God's return, it was necessary such a full recompense should be made him; and that it could not be full any other way than this, by Immanuel. In discoursing of which things, it is not intended to go in the usual way of controversy, to heap up a great number of arguments, and discuss particularly every little cavil that may be raised on the contrary part; but plainly to offer such considerations as may tend to clear the truth, and rather prevent than formally answer objections against it. Wherefore we say,

(1.) It was necessary God's return and vouchsafement of his gracious restored presence to man, as his temple, should be upon terms of *recompense* made him (or as certain to be made) for the indignity and wrong done in the former violation thereof. Towards the evincing of which,

[1.] Several things are gradually laid down. We do not here need to be curious in inquiring, whether the consideration of this recompense to be made, had influence on the gracious purpose of God in this matter, or only on the execution thereof. Nor indeed hath the doubt any proper ground in the present case, which, where it hath disquieted the minds of any, seems to have proceeded from our too great aptness to measure God by ourselves, and prescribe to him the same methods we ourselves are wont to observe. That is, we find it is our way, when we have a design to bring about, upon which we are intent, first to propound the end to ourselves which we would have effected, then to deliberate and consult by what means to effect it: whereupon, we assign to the blessed God the same course. But to him, all his works are known from the beginning of the world: and he ever beheld, at one view, the whole tract and course of means whereby any thing is to be done, which he intends with the intended end itself. So that we have no reason

to affix to him any thought or purpose of favour towards the sinful sons of men, ancienter or more early than his prospect of the way wherein that favourable purpose was to be accomplished.

Nor again can any act or purpose of his towards his creatures be otherwise necessary to him, than from the essential rectitude of the counsels of his own will; the determinations whereof are such as might not have been, or might have been otherwise, where the thing determined was, by those measures, a matter of indifferency. Where it was not so, they are (however necessary, yet also) in that sense most free; as they are directed and approved by his infinite wisdom, and attended with that complacency which naturally accompanies any act or purpose that is in itself most unexceptionably congruous, just, and good.

It may furthermore be truly said, that nothing ought to be reckoned possible to him, upon the agreement only which it holds to some one attribute of his, considered singly and apart from all the rest: as, for instance, in what is next our present case, to forgive all the sins that ever were committed against him, without insisting upon any compensation, were vainly alleged to be correspondent to boundless sovereign mercy, if it will not as well accord with infinite wisdom, justice, and holiness; as it would be unreasonably said to be agreeable enough to him, to throw all the creatures that never offended him into an endless nothingness, in consideration only of the absoluteness of his power and dominion. But whatsoever he can do, must be understood to be agreeable to a Being absolutely and every way perfect.

Moreover we add, that whatsoever is most congruous and fit for him to do, that is truly necessary to him: he cannot swerve in the least tittle, we will not only say from what strict and rigorous justice doth exact and challenge, but also not from what is requisite, under the notion of most comely and decent. Hath it been said of a mortal man, that it was as easy to alter the course of the sun, as to turn him from the path of righteousness? We must suppose it of the eternal God equally impossible that he should be diverted from, or ever omit to do, what is most seemly becoming, and worthy of himself. In such things wherein he is pleased to be our pattern, what we know to be our own duty, we must conclude is his nature: we ought to be found neither in an unjust act or omission, nor undecent one; and he cannot. And if it belong to us to do what is good, it more necessarily belongs to him to do what is best; that is, in

all things that are any way capable of coming under a moral consideration: for as in other matters it is permitted to us to act arbitrarily, so there is nothing hinders but he may much more. Wherefore it is not hence to be thought that therefore it was necessary this universe and every thing in it should have been made as perfect as they could be: as if we ourselves will make any thing for our own use, nothing obliges us to be so very curious about it, as that it may be as neat and accurate as we can devise to make it; it will suffice if it be such as will serve our turn. And indeed, in the works of nature, it would have been less worthy of God to have expressed a scrupulous curiosity that nothing might ever fall out besides one fixed rule, (especially in a state of things designed for no long continuance,) that should extend to all imaginable particularities; as that all men should be of the comeliest stature, all faces of the most graceful aspect, with a thousand the like. But in matters wherein there can be better or worse, in a moral sense, it seems a principle of the plainest evidence, that the blessed God cannot but do that which is simply the best: yea, while a necessity is upon us not only to mind things that are true, and just, and pure, but also that are lovely and of good report, we have no cause to doubt, but whatsoever is comely, and beseeming his most perfect excellencies, is an eternal, indispensable law to him: wherefore it is not enough to consider, in the present case, what it were strictly not unjust for him to do, but what is fit and becoming so excellent and glorious a majesty as his.

Nor now can it be a doubt, but that he only is the competent Judge of what is becoming and worthy of himself; or what is most congruous and fit in itself to be done; (Isa. 40.) "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath instructed him?" &c. Surely the best reason we can exercise in this case, is to think that course reasonable which we find God hath chosen, although we had no insight at all into the matter. There are many constitutions which we have occasion to observe in the course of God's government over the world, which, by the constancy of them, we have ground to think founded in indispensable necessity; though the reasons whereupon they are necessary, are most deeply latent and hidden from us. Not to speak of the abstruser paths and methods of nature, wherein while we observe a constancy, yet perhaps we apprehend it might have been some other way as well: perhaps it might, but it is more than we know. And though, as hath been said, we have reason to suppose that the ways God

hath taken in matters of this sort may be more absolutely arbitrary, yet the constant iteration of the same thing, or continuation of the ancient settled course, shews the peremptoriness of the Creator's counsel, and seems to carry with it an implied rebuke of our ignorant rashness, in thinking it might as well be otherwise; and a stiff asserting of his determinations against us. There are none so well studied naturalists, as to be able to give a rational account why it is so, and so, in many instances; wherein they may yet discern the inflexibleness of nature, and perceive her methods to be as unalterable as they are unaccountable. It is true, this is obvious to be seen by any eye, that where things are well, as they are, constancy doth better than innovation or change; but it very much becomes human modesty, to suppose that there may, in many cases, be other reasons to justify the present course, which we see not: But we may, with more advantage, consider the fixedness of that order which God hath set unto the course of his dispensation towards his intelligent creatures, wherein we shall only instance in some few particulars.

As, first, that there is so little discernible commerce, in the present state, between the superior rank of these creatures and the inferior. That whereas we are well assured there are intelligent creatures, which inhabit not earthly bodies like ours, but hold an agreement with us in greater things; they yet so rarely converse with us. When we consider, that such of them as remain innocent, and such of us as are, by divine mercy, recovered out of a state of apostasy, are all subject to the same common Lord; observe the more substantial things of the same law; have all the same common end; are actuated by the same principle of love, devotedness, and zeal for the interest and honour of the great Maker and Lord of all things. We are all to make up one community with them, and be associates in the same future blessed state; yet they have little intercourse with us—they shun our sight. If sometimes they appear, it is by transient, hasty glances: they are strangely shy and reserved towards us; they check our inquiries; put us, and appear to be themselves, in reference thereto, under awful restraints. We know not the reason of all this: sometimes we may think with ourselves, those pure and holy spirits cannot but be full of kindness, benignity, and love, and concerned for us poor mortals, whom they see put to tug and conflict with many difficulties and calamities; abused by the cunning malice of their and our enemy; imposed upon by the illusions of our own senses. How easily might they make many useful discoveries to us;

relieve our ignorance in many things; acquaint us more expressly with the state of things in the other world; rectify our dark or mistaken apprehensions, concerning many both religious and philosophical matters! But they refrain, and we know not why.

Again, that in the days of our Saviour's converse on earth, there should be so strange a connexion, as to them on whom he wrought miraculous cures, between the divine power and their faith; so that sometimes we find it expressly said, "He could do no mighty work, because of their unbelief."

And we lastly instance, in the fixedness of that course which God hath set for making known to the world the contents of the gospel of Christ: so that little is ever done therein, immediately, or by extraordinary means. The apostle Paul is stopped in the career of his persecution, by an amazing voice and vision; but he is left for instruction as to his future course, to Ananias. Unto Cornelius an angel is sent, not to preach the gospel, but to direct him to send for Peter for that purpose. The Lord doth not immediately himself instruct the Eunuch in the faith of Christ, but directs Philip to do it. And experience shews, that (according to the rule set in that case, Rom. 10.) where they have no preachers, they have no gospel.

Now as to all these cases, and many more that might be thought on, can it be said it would have been unjust, if God had ordered the matter otherwise than he hath? *That*, we cannot so much as imagine; nor are we to think the matter determined as it is, in all such cases, by mere will and pleasure, without a reason; which were an imagination altogether unworthy the supreme wisdom: but that there are reasons of mighty force and weight, or certain congruities, in the natures of things themselves, obvious to the divine understanding, which do either wholly escape ours, or whereof we have but very shallow, dark, conjectural apprehensions; as he that saw men as trees, or as some creatures of very acute sight perceive what to us seems invisible. And yet those occult and hidden reasons and congruities have been the foundation of constitutions and laws that hold things more steadily than adamantine bands, and are of more stability than the foundations of heaven and earth.

Furthermore, it is to be considered that the rights of the divine government; the quality and measure of offences committed against it, and when or upon what terms they may be remitted; or in what case it may be congruous to the dignity of that government to recede from such rights; are matters of

so high a nature, that it becomes us to be very sparing in making an estimate about them; especially a more diminishing one than the general strain of Scripture seems to hold forth. Even among men, how sacred things are majesty and the rights of government, and how much above the reach of a vulgar judgment! Suppose a company of peasants, that understand little more than what is within the compass of their mattock, plough, and shovel, should take upon them to judge of the rights of their prince, and make an estimate of the measure of offences committed against the majesty and dignity of government; how competent judges would we think them? And will we not acknowledge the most refined human understanding as incompetent to judge of the rights of the divine government, or measure the injuriousness of an offence done against it, as the meanest peasant to make an estimate of these matters in a human government? If only the reputation be wronged of a person of better quality, how strictly is it insisted on to have the matter tried by peers, or persons of equal rank; such as are capable of understanding honour and reputation! How would it be resented, if an affront put upon a nobleman should be committed to the judgment of smiths and coblers; especially if they were *participes criminis—sharers in the crime*, and as well parties as judges?

When the regalia of the great Ruler and Lord of heaven and earth are invaded, his temple violated, his presence despised, his image torn down thence and defaced; who among the sons of men are either great, or knowing, or innocent enough, to judge of the offence and wrong, or how fit it is that it be remitted without recompense, or what recompense would be proportionable? How supposable is it, that there may be congruities in this matter obvious to the divine understanding, which infinitely exceed the measure of ours?

[2.] And yet, because God speaks to us about these matters, and they are our own concernments, as being of the offending parties, it is necessary we apply our minds to understand them, and possible to us to attain to a true, though not to a full, understanding of them. And though we can never fully comprehend in our own thoughts the horror of the case, that reasonable creatures, made after God's image, so highly favoured by him, capable of blessedness in him, uncapable of it any other way, should have arrived to that pitch of wickedness towards him, and unnaturalness towards themselves, as to say to him, "Depart from us," and cut themselves off from him; though we may sooner lose ourselves in the contempla-

tion, and be overwhelmed by our own thoughts, than ever see through the monstrous evil of this defection, yet we may soon see it incomparably to transcend the measure of any offence that can ever be done by one creature against another, or of the most scandalous affront the meanest, the vilest, the most ungrateful, ill-natured wretch could have devised to put upon the greatest, the most benign, and best deserving prince the world ever knew. And if we can suppose an offence of that kind may be of so heinous a nature, and so circumstanced as that it cannot be congruous it should be remitted without some reparation made to the majesty of the prince, and compensation for the scandal done to government, it is easy to suppose it much more incongruous it should be so in the present case. Yea, and as it can never be thought congruous that such an offence against a human governor should be pardoned without the intervening repentance of the delinquent, so we may easily apprehend also the case to be such as that it cannot be fit it should be pardoned upon that alone, without other recompense: whereof if any should doubt, I would demand, Is it in any case fit that a penitent delinquent against human laws and government should be punished, or a proportionable recompense be exacted for his offence, notwithstanding? Surely it will be acknowledged ordinarily fit: and who would take upon him to be the censor of the common justice of the world in all such cases; or to damn the proceedings of all times and nations wheresoever a penitent offender hath been made to suffer the legal punishment of his offence, notwithstanding his repentance?

First, How strange a maxim of government would that be, That it is never fit an offender, of whatsoever kind, should be punished, if he repent himself of his offence! And surely if ever in any case somewhat else than repentance be fitly insisted on as a recompense for the violation of the sacred rights of government, it may well be supposed to be so in the case of man's common delinquency and revolt from God, much more.

Secondly, Unto which purpose it is further to be considered, that in this case the matter is much otherwise between God and man, than for the most part between a secular prince and a delinquent subject; that is, that pardon, be it ever so plenary, doth, as pardon, no more than restore the delinquent into as good a condition as he was in before. But what was, for the most part, the case before of delinquent subjects? There are very few that were before the prince's favourites, his intimate associates and friends, with whom he was wont familiarly

to converse. Very often the condition of the offender was such before, that his pardon only saves him from the gallows; lets him live, and enjoy only the poor advantages of his former mean condition; and not always that neither: yea, or if he were one whose higher rank and other circumstances had entitled him to a nearest attendance on the person of the prince, and a daily, inward conversation with him; it is possible he might be pardoned with limitation as to his life, or it may be, further, to his estate, without being restored to the honours and offices about the person of the prince, which he held only by royal favour: for though princely compassion might extend so far as to let his offence be expiated by less than his utter ruin, yet also his prudent respect to the dignity of his government might not admit that a person under public infamy should have the liberty of his presence, intermingle with his councils, or be dignified with more special marks of his favour and kindness. Whereas in the restitution of man, inasmuch as before he was the temple and residence of the great King, where he afforded his most inward, gracious presence, the design is to restore him into the same capacity, and to as good condition as he was in before in these respects: yea, and not only so, but unspeakably to better his case, to take him much nearer to himself than ever, and into a more exalted state. In order whereto, it was the more highly congruous that his offence be done away by a most perfect, unexceptionable expiation; that so high and great an advancement of the most heinous offenders, might not be brought about upon other terms than should well accord with the majesty of his government over the world.

Here, therefore, let a comparative view be taken of the fearful malediction and curse of God's law upon the transgressors of it, and of the copious blessing of the gospel: that thereupon we may the more clearly judge how improbable it was there should be so vast a difference and translation between two so distant states, without atonement made for transgression of so high demerit, and so deeply resented.

As to the former, we are in the general told, (Gal. 3.) that "cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." Astonishing thing! That he should curse me, who made me! That my being, and a curse upon me, should proceed from the word and breath of the same sacred mouth! Of how terrible import is his curse! To be made an anathema, separate and cut off from God, and from all the dutiful and loyal part of his creation! Driven

forth from his delightful presence! In the same breath, it is said to be the loathed wretch, Depart—accursed! To be reduced to the condition of a vagabond on the earth, not knowing whither to go! Naked of divine protection from any violent hand; yea, marked out for the butt of the sharpest arrows of his own indignation! How voluminous and extensive is his curse! reaching to all one's concernments in both worlds, temporal and eternal, of outward and inward man. To be cursed in one's basket and store, in the city and field, in going out and coming in! Especially to have all God's curses and plagues meeting and centering in one's very heart, to be there smitten with blindness, madness, and astonishment! How efficacious is this curse! Not a faint, impotent wishing ill to a man, but under which he really wastes, and which certainly blasts, withers, and consumes him, and even turns his very blessings into curses! How closely adhering, as a garment wherewith he is clothed, and as a girdle with which he is girt continually! How secretly and subtly insinuating, as water into his bowels, and oil into his bones! And how deservedly doth it befal! The curse causeless shall not come; this can never be without a cause. If another curse me, it shews he hates me; if the righteous God do so, it signifies me to be in myself a hateful creature, a son and heir, not of peace, but of wrath and a curse. And the effect must be of equal permanency with its cause; so as that God is angry with the wicked every day, and rains upon them fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, as the portion of their cup; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil, and continually growing into a treasure, against the day of wrath.

View, on the other hand, the copious, abundant blessing contained and conveyed in the gospel. It is a call to blessing, that we may inherit a blessing: it discovers a state begun with the blessedness of having iniquity forgiven; a course, under a continued blessing, of meditating on the word of God with delight, day and night; of being undefiled in the way: gives characters of the subjects of blessings showered down from the mouth of Christ on the poor in spirit, pure in heart, the meek, merciful, &c.: aims at making them nigh, that were afar off; taking them into God's own family and household; making them friends, favourites, domestics, sons, and daughters; engaging them in a fellowship with the Father and Son: yet were all these the children of wrath, by nature. Whence is this change? A regression became not the majesty of heaven.

God's original constitution, that connected sin and the curse, was just; he abides by it, reverses it not. To have reversed it, was not to have judged the offenders, but himself: but having a mind to shew men mercy, he provides for the expiation of sin, and salving the rights of his government, another way—by *transferring* guilt and the curse, not *nulling* them.

Thirdly, Whereupon, we may also see what made atonement for sin so fundamental to a design of grace; the magnifying the divine law; (Isa. 42. 21.) the asserting the equity and righteousness of the supreme government; not, as some odiously suggest, the gratifying of what, with us, is wont to go for a private appetite of revenge, from which the support of the honour and dignity of the government is most remote: yea, it were horrid to suppose that any such thing can have place with the blessed God, which is one of the most odious things in the disposition of lapsed, degenerate man—an aptness to take complacency in the pains and anguish of such as have offended us; unto which purpose, how feelingly would a malicious, ill-minded man, oftentimes utter the sense of his heart, and say, O the sweetness of revenge! So black a thought of God will be most remote from every pious breast, or that is capable of savouring real goodness. Nor doth any precept within the whole compass of that revelation which he hath given us, express more fully, at once, both our duty and his own nature, than that of loving our enemies, or of forgiving men their trespasses. There is, perhaps, somewhere (but O how rarely!) to be found among men, that benign, generous temper of mind, as when an enemy is perfectly within one's power, to be able to take a real solace in shewing mercy; when he is in a fearful, trembling expectation, and hath even yielded himself a prey to revenge, to take pleasure in surprising him by acts of kindness and compassion: one that can avow the contrary sentiment to the spirit of the world, and to them who so emphatically say, How sweet is revenge! and can with greater πάθος—*pathos* oppose to it *that*, as the undisguised sense of his soul, O but how much sweeter is it to forgive! Than which, there is nowhere to be seen a more lively resemblance of God; a truer and more real part of His living image, who hath commanded us to love our enemies; if they hunger, to feed them; to bless them that curse us; to pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us; that we may be his children, that we may shew ourselves born of him, and to have received from him a new, even a divine nature, one truly agreeable to, and resembling his own: and unto whom, therefore, the acts and

operations that naturally proceed from this temper of spirit, are more grateful and savoury than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifice. So are we to frame our conceptions of the ever blessed God, if either we will take the rationally coherent and self-consistent idea of an absolutely perfect Being, or his own frequent affirmations who best understands his own nature, or the course of his actual dispensations towards a sinful world, for our measure of him.

Fourthly, But is it a difficulty to us to reconcile with all this such frequent expressions in the sacred volume, as import a steady purpose that all the sins of men shall be answered with an exactly proportionable measure of punishment? That every transgression shall have a just recompense of reward? That death is the stated wages of sin? Or do we find ourselves more perplexed how to understand, consistently with such declarations of his merciful nature, those passages which sometimes also occur, that seem to intimate a complacential vindictiveness, and delight taken in punishing—the Lord is "jealous, the Lord revengeth:" yea, that he seems to appropriate it as peculiar to himself—"Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it:" that "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil:" that speak of his laying up sin, sealing it among his treasures; of his waiting for a day of recompenses; of his whetting his glittering sword, his making his bow ready, and preparing his arrows on the string; of his being refreshed by acts of vengeance, his satiating of his fury, and causing it hereupon to rest, as having highly pleased and satisfied himself therewith. If any thing alien to the divine nature, and disagreeable to the other so amiable discoveries of it, be thought imported in such expressions, let it only be considered, first, what must be allowed to be their import; and, next, how well so much will agree with a right conception of God.

For the former, it is not necessary that such expressions be understood to intend more, and it seems necessary they be not understood to import less, than a constant, calm, dispassionate, complacential will, so far to punish sin, as shall be necessary to the ends of his government. That they do import a will to punish, is evident; for they are manifest expressions of anger, whereof we can say nothing more gentle, than that it is a will to punish. It cannot signify punishment, without that will; for though the word anger, or wrath, be sometimes used in Scripture for the punishment itself, yet even then that will is supposed, otherwise what is said to be punishment, were an

unintended accident; and then how were it a punishment? Much less can it signify only God's declaration of his will to punish, excluding that will itself; for then what is it a declaration of? Or what doth it declare? Surely we will acknowledge it a true declaration; then it cannot be the declaration of nothing, but must have somewhat in God correspondent to it; namely, the will which it declares. Which being plain, that it be also,

Fifthly, A dispassionate will, accompanied with nothing of perturbation; that it be a constant will, in reference to all such occasions, wherein the sacredness of the divine government, violated, requires such reparation; and without any change, (other than what we may conceive imported in the different aspects of the same object, conceived as future, present, or past, and beheld before, with purpose, afterwards with continual approbation,) the most acknowledged perfection of the divine nature doth manifestly not admit only, but require. For that such a calm, sedate, steady, fixed temper of mind in a magistrate is an excellency, even common reason apprehends: therefore is it said, by a noted Pagan, that judges ought to be *legum similes—like the laws themselves;* which are moved by no passion, yet inflexible: and then where can such an excellency have place in highest perfection, but in the blessed God himself? Yea, and that it be also a complacential will, as some of the expressions above recited seem to import, may very well be admitted, if we rightly conceive and state in our own minds the thing willed by it; that is, the preserving the honour and dignity of the supreme government. Indeed, simply to take pleasure in the pain and misery of another, is so odd and unnatural a disaffection, that it is strange how it can have place any where; and where it seems to have place among men, though too often it really hath so in more monstrously vicious tempers, yet, with many others, (who herein are sufficiently blameable also,) the matter may, perhaps, be somewhat mistaken; as that pleasure may possibly not be taken in the afflicted person's mere suffering, for itself, but only as it is an argument or evidence of the other's superiority, wherein he prides himself, especially if he before misdoubted his own power, and that there hath been a dispute about it, which is now only thus decided: for then a secret joy may arise unto the prevailing party, upon his being delivered from an afflicting fear of being so used himself: and whereas he took it for a disparagement that the other did so far lessen and diminish him in his own thoughts, as to suppose or hope he

should prove the stronger; a pleasure is now taken in letting him feel and have so sensible a demonstration of his error.

Sixthly, But that wherewith we must suppose the blessed God to be pleased, in the matter of punishing, is the congruity of the thing itself, that the sacred rights of his government over the world be vindicated; and that it be understood how ill his nature can comport with any thing that is impure: and what is in itself so highly congruous, cannot but be the matter of his delectation. He takes eternal pleasure in the reasonableness and fitness of his own determinations and actions, and rejoices in the works of his own hands, as agreeing with the apt, eternal schemes and models which he hath conceived in his most wise and all-comprehending mind: so that though he desireth not the death of sinners, and hath no delight in the sufferings of his afflicted creatures, which his immense goodness rather inclines him to behold with compassion, yet the true ends of punishment are so much a greater good than their ease, and exemption from the suffering they had deserved, that they must rather be chosen, and cannot be eligible for any reason, but for which also they are to be delighted in; that is, a real goodness, and conducibleness to a valuable end, inherent in them. Upon which account, the just execution of the divine pleasure in the punishment of insolent offenders is sometimes spoken of under the notion of a solemn festival, a season of joy, yea even of a sacrifice, as having a fragrancy or delectable savour in it. But whereas some of the above-mentioned expressions do seem to intimate a delight in satisfying a furious, vindictive appetite; we are to consider, that what is spoken for the warning and terror of stupid, besotted men, was necessarily to be spoken with some accommodation to their dull apprehension of the things which they yet see and feel not. For which purpose the person is put on, sometimes, of an enraged, mighty man; the terror of which representation is more apprehensible to vulgar minds, than the calm, deliberate proceedings of magistratical justice; it being many times more requisite, that expressions be rather suited to the person spoken to, though they somewhat less exactly square with the thing itself intended to be spoken.

Wherefore this being all that we have any reason to understand imported in such texts of Scripture as we before mentioned, namely, a calm and constant will of preserving the divine government from contempt, by a due punishment of such as do offer injurious affronts to it; and that takes pleasure in itself, or is satisfied with the congruity and fitness of

its own determination; what can there be in this unworthy of God? What that disagrees with his other perfections? Or that the notion of a Being, every way perfect, doth not exact and claim as necessarily belonging to it? For to cut off this from it, were certainly a very great maim to the notion of such a Being, if we consider it as invested with the right and office of supreme rector, or ruler of the world. For if you frame such an idea of a prince as should exclude a disposition to punish offenders, who would not presently observe in it an intolerable defect? Suppose Xenophon to have given this character of his Cyrus:—That he was a person of so sweet a nature, that he permitted every one to do what was good in his own eyes; if any one put indignities upon him, he took no offence at it; he dispensed favours alike to all; even they that despised his authority, invaded his rights, attempted the subversion of his government, with the disturbance and confusion of all that lived under it, had equal countenance and kindness from him, as they that were most observant of his laws, and faithful to his interest; and it were as safe for any one to be his sworn enemy, as his most loyal and devoted subject:—who would take this for a commendation, or think such a one fit to have swayed a sceptre? Can there be no such thing as goodness, without the exclusion and banishment of wisdom, righteousness, and truth? Yea, it is plain they not only consist with it, but that it is a manifest inconsistency it should be without them. The several virtues of a well-instructed mind, as they all concur to make up one entire frame, so they do each of them cast a mutual lustre upon one another; much more is it so with the several excellencies of the Divine Being. But how much too low are our highest and most raised thoughts of the Supreme Majesty! How do we falter when we most earnestly strive to speak and think most worthily of God, and suitably to his excellent greatness!

Seventhly, If the justice of a human government requires such a recompense, much more is it required by that of the Divine government. This is discussed in the following chapter. And the second thing proposed in page 360, namely, "That no recompense could be adequate but that made by Immanuel," is considered in Chap. VIII.

CHAP. VII.

The notion of justice in the divine government, and in a human, not altogether the same.—A thing said to be just, in a negative, and a positive sense:—the question discussed, Whether God's will to punish sin were, antecedently to his legal constitution to that purpose, just, not only in the former sense, but in the latter also?—*Volenti non fit injuria—To him who consents, no wrong is done*, as to man, needs limitation.—Holy Scripture speaks of God's punishing sin, not merely as a concomitant of justice, but an effect:—his will to punish it must proceed from justice; not, primarily, according to the common notion of justice, as it respects the rights of another; therefore another notion of it (as to him) to be sought.—God's rights so unalienable, that he cannot quit them to his own wrong, as man can.—Secondarily, according to the other notion, his right to punish depends not on his legal constitution, but that on it.—That he cannot altogether quit it, no detraction from him.—Justice, in a larger notion, doth further oblige to insist upon recompense; namely, universal justice, as especially it comprehends his *holiness*, and also his *wisdom*.—The fitness of God's methods herein not to be contemplated by men only, but angels.—In what sense punishments to be reckoned debts.—This matter summed up.

WE must also acknowledge a very vast difference between God's government over his intelligent creatures, and that of a secular prince over his subjects; and are thereupon to inquire, whether the notion of justice, as it is applied to the one government and the other, can be the same. A secular ruler is set up and established purposely for the good of the community, as the more principal end of his constitution. The people are not formed for him, but he for them; whence the administration of justice is a public and common right, wherewith he is intrusted by the Supreme Ruler for them, in order to the common good. Well, therefore, may his decrees and edicts go in this form, and have this for their chief scope and end: *Ne quid detrimenti respublica capiat—Let the state receive no injury.* And hence the neglect duly and seasonably to animadvert upon offenders, is a violation of the public justice committed to his management, for which he is accountable to him that intrusted him: it is a wrong done to the community, of whose rights he is the appointed guardian. And

whereas such offences as more directly strike at his crown and dignity, as treason or rebellion, seem more principally levelled against himself and his own rights, so is the legal punishment of them to be more at his arbitrement, whether to inflict or not inflict it; because it may seem in any one's power to dispense with or recede from his own rights. Yet indeed if the matter be more narrowly scanned, the relaxation of these should be, in reason, less in his power than of any other; because they more directly affront that Supreme Ruler whom he represents, and threaten the dissolution of the government, which is the principal civil good of the whole community, and the benefits whereof are their highest right. If violence be done to a private subject, the impunity of the offender would be a public wrong; because it remotely tends, by the badness of the example, to the hurt of the whole community. But in this case, without any such circulation, all the rights of the community are immediately struck at together, in their central knot and juncture; wherefore here, most of all, the prince is debtor to the community. But now, the great Lord and Ruler of the world owes his own creatures nothing: he is, by his goodness, inclined to take care of them, and preserve common order among them; but not owing them any thing, (except by his own word he makes himself a debtor,) he cannot be said to wrong the community, by not providing that punishments be inflicted upon delinquents, according to demerit. What he can be understood, originally, to owe herein, he owes only to himself: whence also the notion of justice which we herein attribute to him, seems very different from that which belongs to human governments; which, though it allows not the disposal of another's right, to his prejudice, forbids not the remitting of one's own.

Whereas, therefore, a thing may be said to be *just*, in a twofold sense; either *negative*, as it is that which justice does not disapprove, or *positive*, as that whereto also justice doth oblige: it is hereupon a question of great moment, Whether God's will to punish sinners, antecedent to his legal constitution to that purpose, were just in the former sense only, or also in the latter? Can we say, God had been unjust, in not so determining? Whose rights had he violated in willing otherwise? Not man's, to whom he did owe nothing. Will we say, His own? But *volenti non fit injuria—to him who consents, no wrong is done:* which maxim doth not set us at liberty absolutely to do whatsoever we will with ourselves, and

what is ours; because of others, whose rights are complicated with ours, the chief Ruler and Lord of all especially, who hath principal interest in us, and all that we have. Yet it holds even as to us: for though we may injure others, God especially, by an undue disposition of our properties, which he intrusts us with; (not for ourselves only, but for himself chiefly, and for other men, whom therefore, in the second place, we may wrong, by disabling ourselves to do them that good which we ought;) and though we may also prejudice ourselves, yet, ourselves apart, we cannot be said so far to wrong, by our own consent, as to be able to resume our right; because, by that consent, (supposing it imprudent, or any way undue,) we have quitted and even forfeited the right, which, for ourselves, we had. But as to God, who has no superior, nor owes any thing to any one, whom can he be thought to wrong, by departing from any of his own rights?

Inasmuch therefore as justice, in the common and most general notion of it, is ever wont to be reckoned conversant about ἀλλότριον ἀγαθὸν—*the good of others*, even that whereto they have a right; it seems not intelligible, how justice, according to this usual notion of it, could primarily oblige God to inflict deserved punishment upon transgressors, if he had not settled a legal constitution to this purpose, and declared that this should be the measure of his proceedings herein; both because it is so little conceivable how the punishments of the other state (which we are chiefly to consider) can be a good to them who do not suffer them, (as we are sure they can be none to them that do,) and also that it is not to be understood how, if they were, they could otherwise have any right thereto, than by that constitution by which (as, before, God's dominion was that of an absolute, sovereign Lord) he now undertakes the part of a governor, ruling according to known and established laws.

Yet it is very plain, that for the actual infliction of such punishments, holy Scripture speaks of it not merely as a concomitant of justice, or as that which may consist with it, but as an effect; which the ἀνταπόδοσις, mentioned by the apostle, plainly signifies, (2 Thess. 1. 6.) when he tells us, it is with God δίκαιον—*a righteous thing*, (that must be not only what justice doth admit, but exact,) ἀνταποδοῦναι—*to recompense* tribulation to the troublers of his people, &c. And when we are told, (Rom. 2. 6.) that God ἀποδώσει—*will render* (or recompense) to every one according to his works, even in the

day above mentioned, (*v.* 5.) which is called, ἡμέρα ὀργῆς, καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας, τοῦ θεοῦ—*the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God;* and that it is said, the world was to become ὑπόδικος—*guilty*, (we read,) *liable to be impleaded* before God, Rom. 3. 19. And again, (*ch.* 12. 19.) that ἐκδίκησις—*vengeance* is said to belong to him, and he will repay; with many more passages of like import.

But to carry the matter higher: it being evident it is that which justice doth require, to punish sin, according to such a constitution once made; yet, all this while, how the constitution was any necessary effect of justice, appears not. Nor are we helped by the common notion of justice herein, and are therefore cast upon the inquiry, Whether any other notion of justice be fitly assignable, according whereto it may be understood to have required the making that constitution itself?

It is here to be considered, whence, or from what fountain, any man, or community of men, come to have right to any thing. It cannot be, but that the Fountain of all being must be the Fountain of all rights. From whence things, absolutely considered, descend, all the relations that result must also descend. There can therefore be no pretence of right to any thing, among creatures, but from God; He, as the Sovereign Proprietor and Lord of all, settles such and such rights in creatures, which they hold and retain dependently on him, upon terms and according to rules which he hath prescribed; so as that by transgression men may forfeit such rights, or by consent and mutual contracts transfer them to one another. Whereupon they have no unalienable rights, none whereof they may not be divested, either by their default or consent; sometimes by both together, as by a faulty consent. And indeed if it be by the former, it must be by the latter; because no man is supposed to commit a fault against his will. But it may be by the latter without the former, as none can doubt but one may innocently divest himself, in many cases, of his own present right; otherwise, there could be no such thing in the world as either gift or sale. And hence it comes to pass, that the justice which is inherent in any man, comes to be conversant about the rights of another, not his own; so far as to oblige him not to intrench upon the rights of another, while yet it forbids him not to dispose of his own, as they are merely his. And there is no such thing as justice towards a man's self, so inhibiting him as (though

perhaps such an act ought not to have been done) to make his act in that kind invalid, when he hath done it, only because he hath thereby wronged himself; or which he can, afterwards, allege against his own act or deed. For he hath no other rights in any thing, than what are derived, borrowed, dependent on the Supreme Proprietor, measurable by his rules, by which they are not unalienable; yea, justice obliges, if he swear to his own hurt, not to change, Ps. 15.

But now, with the Supreme Proprietor, there cannot but be unalienable rights, inseparably and everlastingly inherent in him: for it cannot be, but that He that is the Fountain of all rights, must have them primarily and originally in himself; and can no more so quit them, as to make the creature absolute and independent, than he can make the creature God. Wherefore, though with man there can be no such thing as justice towards one's self, disenabling him to forego his own rights, the case cannot but be quite otherwise as to God, and for the same reason for which it cannot agree to man; because man hath none but borrowed and alienable rights, which he can forego to his own prejudice, and God hath none that he can so part with. Hereupon, therefore, God did owe it to himself *primarily*, as the absolute Sovereign and Lord of all, not to suffer indignities to be offered him, without animadverting upon them, and therefore to determine he would do so.

But withal, he having undertaken the part of a legal Governor, and to rule by established laws, which should be the stated measures of sin and duty, of punishments and rewards; hereby common order was to be preserved in the governed community: and having published his constitution in his word and otherwise sufficiently to that purpose, he hath hereby, *secondarily*, made himself Debtor to the community, and by his constitution given men some right to the benefit of that order which was to be maintained among them by these means: which benefit they do here, in this present state, actually partake in some measure; and might in a greater measure, if they were more governable, or would regard and be awed more by the laws (with their sanctions) of their great and rightful Ruler and Lord. Wherefore, though men have no benefit by the punishments of the future state, they have, or might have, by the feared commination of them, which, neglected, made the actual infliction of them necessary. Nor had they only the probable benefit of present order hereby,

but of a future well-being; it being the design of that, as of all the comminations of wise and good rulers, to prevent the desert of the threatened punishment, and consequently the punishment itself. And though men could have no right to any such benefit, before the constitution; yet it is not inconceivable, that by it they might have some; namely, an inferior and secondary right.

Wherefore the blessed God, by making the legal constitution, which he will have to stand as the measure of his government, hath not added to his own right to govern and punish as there is cause; for it was natural, and needed nothing to support it. The constitution rather limits than causes his right, which depends not on it, but gives rise to it rather. He gives assurance, by it, of his equal dealing, and that he will not lay upon man more than is right, that he should enter into judgment with God, Job 34. 12, 23. And whereas he hath been pleased to publish his constitution, in the form of a covenant, variously attempered to the different states of men, nothing accrues to him by their stipulating with him thereupon. He is their Governor, as he is their Maker; not at their choice, which in propriety the case admits not, there being no competitor that pretends against him; but is only a loyal, dutiful consent, or recognising his former right. They that consent to it, do therefore more deeply oblige themselves to their own duty, and entitle themselves to his covenanted favours; but can entitle him to nothing, for their all was his before: his contract shews his condescension, not defective title. And this his antecedent, original right, that peculiar excellency of his nature, his justice to himself inviolably preserves, as the faithful guardian of all his sacred rights. So that when he undertakes the part of a legal Governor, it indispensably necessitates his doing whatsoever is requisite for supporting the honour and dignity of his government; and can permit nothing that shall detract from it, or render it less august and awful.

Yet need we not here over scrupulously defend the common notion of justice, in the utmost strictness of it, that makes it conversant only about another's right, and seems therefore to imply that a man can owe nothing to himself. That love to others which comprehends all our duty to them, is to be measured by love to ourselves, which seems equally comprehensive of duty which we are supposed to owe to ourselves. Nor shall we dispute whether in no sense one can be both creditor and debtor; or whether insobriety be not properly un-

righteousness, and sobriety justice, even towards one's self: subordination to God being still preserved, under whom, and for whom, only we can owe any thing to ourselves or others. Only supposing, among men, such a thing as self-justice, it is with them a weaker and more debile principle, that may betray and lose their rights, which then no justice can reclaim. Whereas, with God, it is, as all other excellencies are, in highest perfection, and hath always the force with him of an eternal and immutable law.

And if any should imagine this to detract from the absoluteness of God's dominion and sovereignty, and set him in this respect beneath his own creatures, that whereas *they* can quit their rights, it should be supposed *he* cannot forego his; it is answered, It hath not been said, that God can forego none of his own rights; it is plain he doth, when having the right to punish a sinner, he by pardon confers upon him right to impunity: but he cannot do it to the prejudice and dishonour of his glorious excellencies, and the dignity of his government. And therefore, if some preparation were requisite to his doing it, consistently with the due honour and reputation thereof, justice towards himself required he should insist upon it; which is no more a detraction from his absoluteness, than that he cannot lie, or do any thing unworthy of himself. He is so *absolute*, that he can do whatever he pleases; but so *just*, that he cannot be pleased to do an unrighteous thing.

But besides that stricter notion of God's justice, as it is conversant about, and conservative of, his own rights; we may also consider it in a larger and more comprehensive notion, as it includes his several moral attributes and excellencies, and answers to that which among men is called *universal justice*, and reckoned to contain in it all virtues.* For so taken, it comprehends his *holiness*, and perfect detestation of all impurity, in respect whereof he cannot but be perpetually inclined to animadvert with severity upon sin; both because of its irreconcilable contrariety to his holy nature, and the insolent affront which it therefore directly offers him; and because of the implicit, most injurious misrepresentation of him, which it contains in it, as if he were either kindly or more indifferently affected towards it: upon which accounts, we may well sup-

* Ἐν δε δικαιοσύνῃ συλλήβδην πᾶς ἀγετ' ἔνι—*Righteousness comprises every virtue.*

pose him to esteem it necessary for him, both to constitute a rule for punishing it, and to punish it accordingly; that he may both truly *act* his own nature, and truly *represent* it.

And again, if we take the notion of his justice in this latitude, it will comprehend his governing *wisdom;* the part of which attribute it is, to determine and direct the doing whatsoever is fit to be determined and done; as it is the part of his righteousness (taken in the strictest sense) to resolve upon and execute whatever the rules of justice do require and call for. It is the judge of decencies, or what it is meet and becoming him, as the Lord and Ruler of the world, to do or not do. And a very reasonable account might be given of this matter, that we may renew and somewhat further insist on what was said before, chap. vi. p. 369. There are many just laws made by human legislators, to the making whereof, though justice (in the stricter sense) did not rigidly oblige them, so that they had been unjust if they had not made them, yet this other principle, of equal importance to government, and which also doth not altogether refuse the name of justice, might require the making them, and would not be well comported with by omitting to make them.

Hereupon therefore if it should be inquired, Was it, antecedently to the making of this constitution, an indifferent thing with God, whether to determine sin should be punished, or not? I answer, even upon this ground, No; it was not indifferent, but indispensably necessary. Any thing is with him necessary, as he is the Supreme Governor, that is upon a prudential account most fit and conducible to the ends of government. An antecedent necessity we might therefore assert, such as not only arises from his justice, most strictly taken, but his wisdom also; whose part it is to judge of congruities, as it is the part of strict justice to determine matters of right. Nor is it unfit to say, Wisdom is the chief principle exercised in making laws, justice in governing according to laws already made. I say, the *chief;* for justice hath that part in legislation too, which hath been assigned it, as wisdom hath also its part in the consequent administration. And what can be more necessary to the great God, than to do ever what is most becoming and worthy of himself? And what could have been so becoming of him, as to let it appear to the world how sacred the rights of his empire over it are! how horrid a thing the defection of a reasonable creature is, from the great Author

and Lord of its life and being! how costly an expiation it did require! how solemn rights were to be performed! how great and awful transactions, that sin might become pardonable! What could so tend to exalt majesty, to magnify the reputation of his government, to possess his reasonable creatures with awful apprehensions, and make them dread to offend? In a prudent government, how great a thing is reason of state! Even where there is the greatest inclination imaginable to be in all things most strictly and unexceptionably just, yet is that the only care with prudent governors, that they may be able to approve the justice of their administrations? There are many things which, without transgressing particular rules of justice, might have been omitted, from which yet, upon mere reason of state, you can no more make them swerve one ace, than you can remove the earth from its centre, or change the ordinances of day and night; and whereas that hath place in all things that tend to the keeping up the reputation and grandeur of government, where can it claim to have place with equal right as here? Whereupon we may, with greatest assurance, assert, that in things which have this reference, it is equally impossible to the absolute perfection of the divine nature, that God should do an inept or unfit thing, as an unjust. And whereas his righteousness is the directive principle, in respect of equity or iniquity; so is his wisdom, of congruity and incongruity, decency and indecency: and that it is equally necessary to him to do what is most worthy of himself, and most becoming his excellent greatness, as what is most strictly just. Therefore that when his most transcendent greatness is represented in terms as high and great as could come under human conception, (Heb. 2. 10.) *He*, namely, *for whom are all things*, and *by whom are all things;* (and what could sound higher?) it is considered what was most becoming of him, as such; and determined that it became Him, for and by whom all things were, since there was one (though so great a one) that had undertaken for sinners, to be the Prince or Prefect (ἀρχηγὸν) over the great affair of their salvation, especially being to make them, of rebels, sons, and as such, bring them to glory, out of the meanest and most abject state; that he should not be made perfect, (not be duly initiated into his great office, or not be complete master of his design,) otherwise than by his own intervening suffering. Meaner persons might do as became their meaner condition; but He, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, must do

as best became the most glorious greatness of Him, who is the First and the Last, the Author and the End of all things!

We are prone to confine our apprehensions of things to our own narrow sphere, that have reference also to another besides, and greater than ours. If God had no creatures but man, capable of government by laws, the case had been much other than it is; for considering that men have all been in one common case of apostasy and condemnation, they who should be restored to favour and a happy state, should have no reason to look strangely upon one another, whatsoever the way and terms were of their restitution, being all dealt with alike. But we are to design a larger field and scene for our thoughts, and to consider, that besides men, that shall be restored from a fallen and lapsed state, there are numberless myriads of pure and loyal spirits, that never fell, and with whom restored men are to make one entire, happy community, for ever. Now we are to consider what aspect the matter would have in their eyes, if not a single person, or two, but so vast a multitude, (and not guilty of some light, transient offence only, but of insolent, malicious enmity and rebellion against the divine government, propagated and transmitted from age to age, through all the successions of time,) should be brought in upon them, to partake in the dignities and blessedness of their state, without any reparation made of so great and continuing an injury! Though their perfect subjection in all things to the good pleasure of God would not allow them to be exceptious, and apt to censure his doings or determinations, yet also his most perfect wisdom and exact judgment, and knowledge of what is in itself most fit, could much less admit he should do any thing liable to be censured by his creatures, as less fit. And no doubt so large and capacious intellects may well be supposed to penetrate far into the reason and wisdom of his dispensations; and so not only to exercise submission, in an implicit acquiescence in the unseen and only believed fitness of them, but also to take an inexpressible complacency and satisfaction in what they manifestly discern thereof, and to be able to resolve their delectation in the ways and works of God into a higher cause and reason than the mere general belief that he doth all things well; namely, their immediate, delightful view of the congruity and fitness of what he does. When they behold the apostasy and revolt of the sons of men expiated by one of themselves, but with whom the Divine Nature, in his own Son, was so intimately united, that the

atonement made was both fit, as from them, and adequate, as to him: this they cannot but behold with complacential approbation and admiration; for, no doubt, he made creatures of such a capacity, with a design to gratify the understandings he gave them, by approving and recommending the exactness and accuracy of his methods thereto; otherwise, a far lower measure of intellectual ability, in these creatures, had answered the Creator's purpose as well. They certainly cannot but approve that way he hath taken, for itself; and do doubtless stoop down to look into it, not with less complacency, than wonder; it being, in the congruity of it, as suitable to their bright and clear intellects, being revealed, as for the strange contrivance thereof it had been altogether above them, if it had not been revealed. They cannot, when they behold a full, glorious vindication of the offence and wrong done to their common Lord, and the dignity of his government, by his revolted creatures, antecedent to the reception of any of them into grace and favour, but highly admire the lovely comeliness and congruity of his whole dispensation, and express their pleasant resentments, by bearing a part with the redeemed society in such strains of praise, such admirations and applauses, as these: "Holy and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy judgments, thou King of nations and of saints!"

Upon the whole, there appears sufficient reason to conclude, not only upon the account of justice more strictly taken, but also of congruity and fitness, or according to such a larger notion of justice as imports an inflexible propension to do what is fit and congruous to be done, it was indispensably necessary the holy God should, in order to his return to his temple among men, insist to have a recompense made for the wrong that was done him by the violation of it. Nor let this be understood to detract from, but add to, what hath been above discoursed of justice, taken in a most strict sense, and most appropriate to God, as it is, primarily and in the first place, conservative of his own most sacred rights; which must be, by consequence, vindictive of the violation of them: and this is the original justice, (as his are the original rights, and the fountain of all other,) and must have had place, though he had settled no express constitution of government. And also as, secondarily, it is conservative of the rights of the governed community, which, by the constitution once settled, accrue to it.

Whereupon also it may be understood, in what sense punishments, passively taken, are to be accounted *debts*. And it is fitter to distinguish, and thereupon to explain, how they are or are not so, than at random to deny they are so at all, when our Lord hath taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts;" and when it is so plain in itself, that he who by delinquency hath forfeited his life, is most truly said to owe it to justice. Yea, and when, though the *creditor pœnæ—he who has a right to punish* is said not to be so easily assignable, yet no doubt at all is made concerning the debtor; for how absurdly should he be said to be a debtor, that owes no debt? Therefore punishments are not of the nature of those debts that, according to the rules of commutative justice, arise by contract between man and man; and which, as they arise by consent between the two covenanting parties, may as well cease by consent. But nothing hinders, but they may be such debts as are to be estimated by the distributive justice of rulers, whereof we must either say, that of some, justice doth oblige human and secular rulers to exact the punishment; or else, that magistratical justice would allow the remitting of all, and that no offences of any kind be ever at all punished. But if the justice of any secular rulers oblige them to punish some offenders, then most of all that of the supreme and most absolute Ruler and Lord of all, whose rights are natural, and depend not on our consent, or any contract with us, any more than our consent was previous to our coming into being, or our becoming his creatures; and whose justice must be more concerned to protect and vindicate his rights, than that of any earthly governor can be to preserve the rights of even the most considerable community: no community, nor all taken together, nor even the whole creation, being of any comparable value with the interest of the supreme and universal Ruler, of himself alone; in respect of whom all nations are as the "drop of the bucket, &c." especially if we add, (though that be but of secondary consideration,) that the rights of the greatest, even the universal community of all mankind, are involved with his own, and that their common peace and order are to be preserved by punishments, even eternal ones, not as executed, but as threatened; which, as hath been said, made the execution necessary, where the terms and method of remission are not complied with.

And whereas it is reckoned difficult to assign the *creditor pœnæ*, the reason of that is not difficult to be assigned, if we consider what the true notion of a creditor is. And it is not taken *passively*, for him who is intrusted with another's

rights, at least is not so to be limited; inasmuch as a man may be more properly creditor of what is his own than of what is another's; but *actively*, for one who trusts another. But the *debitor pœnæ—he who is liable to punishment*, is not intrusted with any thing, but is only to be punished when he can be met with, and duly brought thereto; and therefore is not bound to offer himself to punishment, as another debtor is to pay what he owes: he is to be active in the solution; the delinquent, passive only: whence *dare pœnas* is rightly interpreted to *suffer punishment*. And that this is all he is obliged to, is plain, if we consider that it is not the precept of the law that in this case obliges him, which only obliges to the doing of duty; but the annexed commination, which can only oblige to undergo punishment.

Creditor indeed is chosen as a fit word to express the correlative unto *debitor pœnæ;* but by it we are to understand no more than only the object of this solution: so in human governments, the *governor* is improperly, namely, as he is intrusted with the rights of the community. But in the divine government, God himself, originally and radically, as he is Maker and Lord of all; immediately and formally, as he is the supreme Ruler, and such a one therefore as governs principally, *suo jure*, and for himself, not for others. For he cannot but be his own supreme end; that he also doth undertake the care of the concernments and good of others, is of mere vouchsafement and condescension, not from any antecedent obligation so to do.

The sum of all therefore is, that whether we take divine justice in the larger sense, as it comprehends all the moral excellencies that relate to the government of God over man, especially his wisdom and his holiness, or whether we take it in the stricter sense, for a principle inclining him to maintain and vindicate the rights and dignity of his government, it did direct as well his making a constitution for the punishing of affronts and offences committed against it, as to proceed according to it, so as not to remit such injuries to the offender without most sufficient recompense.

CHAP. VIII.

The head marked thus (1.) being so far insisted on, namely, that a sufficient recompense was necessary; we proceed to shew, (2.) That no less was sufficient than that made by Immanuel. [1.] Dishonourable to have insisted on less. [2.] What the divine estimate in this matter was, his own word shews. [3.] His love to offenders would otherwise have been under restraint. [4.] It is proposed to consider two things: First, What was to be remitted; where is shewn, 1. The greatness of the offence—the sins of all times and ages. That the recompense is not applicable to fallen angels, or to the impenitent and unbelieving under the gospel, does not arise from any insufficiency. 2. The way and manner in which remission is to be granted: namely, by a universal law. Secondly, What is to be vouchsafed; which follows in Chap. IX.

AND so much being clear, there is less need to insist copiously in shewing what was proposed, ch. vi. p. 360. and which comes next to be considered,

(2.) That no recompense could be sufficient for expiating the wrong done by the violation of God's temple among men, and the laying its foundations anew, besides that which hath been made by the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us. And this, by his becoming himself first an original Temple, a Man, inhabited with all the fulness of God, and then made also a Sacrifice to the offended majesty and justice of Heaven, for those great and high purposes, the expiating the indignity of violating God's former temple, and the raising, forming, and beautifying it anew, in conformity to its present pattern and original; and then possessing, inhabiting, and restoring the divine presence in it. For as it hath been shewn already, that this recompense could not but be full, and apt to answer these purposes; so it is in itself evident, that whatsoever should be tendered in the name of a recompense, ought to be *full*, and proportionable to the wrong done, and to the favours afterwards to be shewn to the transgressors. Here therefore let it be observed,

[1.] That it would have been dishonourable to have insisted on less: for it were manifestly more honourable and worthy of God not to have exacted any recompense at all, than

to have accepted, in the name of a sacrifice, such as were unproportionable, and beneath the value of what was to be remitted and conferred. What had been lower must have been infinitely lower; let any thing be supposed less than God, and it falls immensely short of him. Such is the distance between created being and uncreated, that the former is as nothing to the latter; and therefore, bring the honour and majesty of the Deity to any thing less than an equal value, and you bring it to nothing. And this had been quite to lose the design of insisting upon a recompense; it had been to make the majesty of heaven cheap, and depreciate the dignity of the divine government, instead of rendering it august and great. Therefore the whole constitution of Immanuel, his undertaking, performances, and acquisitions, appear to have been not only apt, suitable, and sufficient to the intended purposes, (which was first proposed to be shewn,) but also requisite and necessary thereto.

[2.] What the divine estimate in this matter was, his own word shews: and for the evincing hereof, let us apply our minds to meditate silently and intently a while on those words of our Lord, (John 10. 17.) "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life:" and let us consider them with that reverence which we cannot but conceive due to words we esteem most sacred and divine; that is, that they could not be rashly or lightly spoken: whereupon, let us bethink ourselves, Have those words a meaning? *This*, our awful regard to the venerable greatness of Him that spoke them, cannot suffer us to doubt. And if they mean any thing, it is impossible they should not mean somewhat most profound and great; somewhat that implies a reference to a peculiar θεοπρεπὲς, that is, a *divine decorum*, which as an eternal law perpetually conducts all the propensions and determinations of God's most perfect will, that could by no means suffer any violation: what was most becoming of God; namely, what might best "become him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things;" (Heb. 2. 10.) worthy of the great, all-comprehending, central, original Being, from whence all things sprang, and wherein all terminate. Here is some gradual retection (if we consider what immediately follows, "In bringing many sons to glory, &c.") of the veiled *arcana* of the Divine Being: if we may, on so fit occasion, allude to the inscription in the Egyptian temple, elsewhere mentioned in this discourse—"I am all that was, and is, and shall be, and who is he that shall draw aside my veil?" Here is, in some part, a withdrawing of that sacred

veil, by Him to whom by prerogative it belonged, and of whom it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father: he hath declared him," John 1. 18. Here is some disclosure of the mystery of God, of the Father, (Col. 2. 2.) in whom the divine nature was primarily, and as in that first fountain; and of Christ, the mystery of the Mediator, of whom Christ was the distinguishing name. The agreement, hitherto inconceivable and most mysterious, of the absolute purity and perfection of the divine nature, with the admirable mercifulness of the constitution of Immanuel, of God and man united in one, in order to the reconciliation of the holy, blessed God, with unholy, miserable man. How was it to be brought about, in a way becoming Him for whom and by whom all things were, so great, so august a Majesty! that He should admit that so despicable and rebellious a race should not only be saved, but be made sons! This could never be, though his immense and boundless love most strongly inclined him to it, but by their having one of highest dignity, his own Son, set as a Prince or Prefect over the whole affair of their salvation; nor by him, but upon his own intervening suffering! This was according to fixed rule indispensably necessary; that is, by the inviolable maxims of the divine government. But because, through the inconceivable riches of his own goodness, this was a thing he was most propense unto, and intent upon; yet because the death of his own Son in their stead could neither be meritorious nor just, without his own free consent, therefore, says our Lord, doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life—What conceivable reason can there be of this connexion, ("He therefore loves me, because I lay down my life,") without the concurrence of these two things to be considered conjunctly? namely, A most intense, vehement love to a perishing world; and an inflexible regard to the eternal, immutable measures of right and wrong, fit and unfit, decent and indecent, that had their fixed, everlasting seat in the mind of God.

The first made the *end* necessary, the preventing the total, eternal ruin of a lost world; the second made the Son of God's *death*, and his *own consent* thereto, the necessary means to this end. The former, namely, the *end*, was not otherwise necessary than upon supposition; it was not so absolutely necessary, that by any means, right or wrong, fit or unfit, such a ruin (even most deserved) must be prevented. But it was so far necessary, as that if, by any rightful and decorous means,

this ruin could be prevented as to many, and a contrary blessed state of perpetual life be attained by them, this must be effected and brought about for them. Not, it is true, for all offenders, but as many as the like eternal, indispensable means and measures of equal and unequal, fit and unfit, capable and uncapable, should not exclude.

All this we have in that most admirable text of Scripture, (John 3. 16.) "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *So loved!* The matter is signified in such a way, as to leave all men amazed! and by their astonishment to supply their most defective conception of so stupendous a love. The *world* is an indefinite term, that contains the special and the afterwards specified object of this love; not a single person, but a whole race of intelligent creatures, a world inhabited by such, that were not to be left, and finally all swallowed up together in one common ruin; that upon this account he gave his only begotten Son to *death*, as the event and known design shewed. And how inconceivable must his love be to his only begotten Son! "The Brightness of his glory, the express Image of his person!" Always his Delight! Yet rather than all this world should be lost for ever, He is thus given up! "That whosoever believe on him, should not perish, &c." which expresses the certain, specified, declared object of this love: leaving *them* certainly excluded, who, after sufficient proposal, refuse their homage to the throne of Immanuel; choose rather their forlorn souls should be for ever forsaken of the divine presence, than unite with him, and surrender themselves to him, by whom alone they might be refitted, animated again, and inhabited as his living temples. Their exclusion is necessary, by such measures as those, by which such means were necessary to the salvation and blessedness of the others. But who can doubt hereupon, but that this course was indispensably necessary to this end? Especially if (reviewing that first-mentioned text) we consider, that our Lord represents his laying down his life as an unexpressible additional endearment of him to the Father: as if he should say, "O thou Son of my delights, thou hast now set my love to lost souls at liberty, that hath been ever pregnant with great and godlike designs towards them, and that must otherwise have been under perpetual restraint:" which is,

[3.] Most evidently implied. But it may be said, Could the love of God be under restraint? And I say No, it could

not; therefore to the all-comprehending Mind, where ends and means lie connected together under one permanent, eternal view, this course presented itself, as peculiarly accommodate to this end; and was therefore eternally determined by easy concert between the Father and the Son, not to remedy, but prevent any such restraint. Yet it may be further urged, Cannot the absoluteness and omnipotency of a God enable him to satisfy his own propensions, if it were to save ever so many thousand worlds of offending creatures, without taking such a circuit as this? It was once said to a human mortal king, that had about him but a thin shadow of sovereignty, Dost thou now govern Israel, and not make thy will any way take place? Much more might it here be said, Dost thou govern the world? Art thou not God? Yes! and may freely say, I can the less, for that I am God, do what is not Godlike; that is, can therefore the less break through established, eternal measures, and counteract myself. I must do as becomes Him, for whom and by whom are all things. Others may assume to themselves an imagined, unhallowed liberty of pursuing, at the next, their own inclinations; but it is beneath divine greatness to do so. Yet in this case (it may be further said) why did not love to his Son preponderate? Which our Lord himself in great part obviates by what is subjoined—"because I lay down my life;" how? With a power and design to take it again, as v. 18. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: this is a matter agreed. I am not to lie under a perpetual death; that could neither be grateful to my Father, nor is in itself possible. But as things are stated, I am prepared to endure the cross, and despise the shame, for the joy set before me; which joy will be everlastingly common to him and me, and to the whole redeemed community, according to their measure." But was all this unnecessary trifling? What serious man's reverence of Deity can let him endure to harbour so profane a thought! Therefore take we now the entire state of this matter, as it lies plainly in view before us, in these texts of Scripture: first, here is an unexpressible love of God to undone, lost sinners: secondly, here is a plain intimation that this love must have been under a suspension and restraint, if God's own Son had not laid down his life for them: thirdly, it is as plainly signified, that the Son of God's laying down his life for them, was, in divine estimate, a sufficient expedient to prevent this restraint upon his love to sinners:

fourthly, that this expedient was reckoned by the blessed God more eligible, than that his love to sinners should be under perpetual, everlasting restraint: fifthly, that it was only reckoned more eligible, as there was a conjunct consideration had of his laying it down, with a power and design of resuming and taking it again: sixthly, that therefore, as the eternal God had a most constant, unquestionable love to his only-begotten Son, his love to him hath a peculiar and most complacential exercise, on the account of his concurring with him upon this expedient; choosing rather to endure all the dolours of that "one hour, and power of darkness," that was to come upon him, than that a whole world of reasonable creatures, his own offspring, and bearing his own image, should all perish together everlastingly. But who now sees not that this was the determinate judgment of the great God, namely, that his gracious designs towards guilty creatures were not otherwise to be effected, than in this way? And yet, for the further clearing of this matter, taking Heb. 10. 4. that the blood of the Lord Christ, and of bulls and goats, are put in direct opposition to each other; and hereupon, that it is said of the latter, "It is not possible it should take away sin:" what can that imply less, than that the former was necessary to the taking it away? Let us but appeal to ourselves, what else can it mean? Will we say, though sin could not be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats, it might by some nobler sacrifice of an intermediate value? But is not this manifestly precluded, and barred by the immediateness of the opposition? These two only are in competition, and it is said, not *this*, but *that*. Other sacrifices God would not; (Ps. 40. 6, 7.) then, saith our Lord, "Lo! I come." *These* are rejected, *this* is chosen; he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, Heb. 10. 9. When it is said, (Mic. 6. 6, 7.) not thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil; if one should say, Yea, but eleven thousand might serve; were not this trifling, not reasoning? Is it not plain all other were refusable, for the same reason?

I shall now somewhat enlarge (as was formerly designed) upon the two things already intimated under the foregoing head of Immanuel's sufficiency, &c. as having acquired the twofold power of *forgiving sin*, and *giving the Spirit*. And shall now shew, further, the *necessity* of his engaging in this affair (the restoring of God's temple) with reference to both these things, requisite thereto.

[4.] And to this purpose, let it be considered—What was to be *remitted*, and what was to be *conferred*, by his procurement.

First, What was to be *remitted*. It was not the single trespass of one or a few delinquent persons, but the revolt and rebellion of a vast community; a universal hostility and enmity, continued and propagated through many successive ages, that was now, once for all, to be atoned for. It is hereupon to be considered, How great the offence was that must be remitted, and the way and manner in which the grant was to be made of this remission.

1. How great was the offence to be remitted! A whole race and order of creatures had been in a conspiracy against their rightful Lord, to deface his temple, tear down his image, invade his rights, withhold and incapacitate themselves for his worship, substitute, instead of that, highest contempt, banish his presence, and as much as in them lay raze out his memorial, that he might be no more known, feared, or served upon earth! How horrid a prospect had the Lord from heaven, when, from the throne of his glory there, he beheld the state of things below! (Ps. 14. 2, 3.) "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any did understand, and seek after God; they are all gone back, none that does good, no not one." All were become such mischievous, wicked fools, as to say, with one consent, in their hearts,—No God! And though, it is true, this wickedness was not in event to be actually remitted to all, the case was to be so stated, that remission might be universally offered; and that it be left to lie upon men's own score if it were not accepted; and therefore, that a sacrifice must be offered up, of no less value than if every single transgressor was to have his actual, sealed pardon.

For let it be considered what sort of transgressors are excluded the benefit of remission, on the account of that great Sacrifice that once for all was offered up; and we find it not difficult to apprehend other most important reasons why they are excluded; but no colour of a reason that it should be for want of sufficient value in this Sacrifice.

As for the *angels that fell*, though their case comes not directly under our present consideration, yet occasionally, and as *(a fortiori)* we may argue from it, some thoughts may be usefully employed about it. The divine pleasure herein is indeed intimated, in the Son of God's not taking *their* nature, but *ours;*

and his known measure of shewing mercy, is that he will shew mercy, because he will shew mercy. Yet, whereas we find that the most sovereign act of grace, the predestinating of some to the adoption of children, is ascribed to the good pleasure, (Eph. 1. 5.) the same act is ascribed also to the counsel of his will, *v.* 11. And when we see the apostle in that holy transport, (Rom. 11. 33.) crying out, in contemplation of distinguishing mercy, ὦ βάθος—*O the depth!* he doth not say of the *sovereign power*, but of the *wisdom and knowledge* of God; and admires the unsearchableness, not of his arbitrary determinations, but of his judgments and ways, or judicial proceedings towards them that believed, or believed not: (Ps. 30. 31. 32.) implying that he had reasons to himself, though past our finding out, of his different proceedings towards some, and others. And as for the angels that fell, and whom he thought fit not to spare, (2 Pet. 2. 4, 5. Jude 6.) he threw them into chains of darkness, resolving to deal with them, not upon terms of absolute sovereignty, but of justice, therefore reserving them to the judgment of the great day; not in the mean time affording them a second trial, in order to their recovery, as he hath to us, even of mere mercy; for no justice could oblige him to offer us new terms. Yet their case and ours so differed, that there are reasons obvious to view, and which must lie open to all, in the public, final judgment, why he might judge it fitter to design the objects of mercy among men, than the apostate angels. As,

That we must suppose them (namely, the angels) created, each of them, in *perfect maturity*, unto which we (our first parents excepted) grow up gradually and by slow degrees. *They* had their intellectual ability fit for present exercise, when they first existed, and did all then at once coexist; (as we generally reckon, having nothing to induce us to think otherwise;) *we* come into being successively, and exist *here* but in a succession.

Whereas they therefore must be understood to have been originally under a sort of covenant of works, (as we were,) or were some way or other made to understand what, by the law of their creation, was their duty towards the Author of their being, and what their expectations might be from him; we have no reason therefore to apprehend that they were treated with, in one common head of their own order, in whom they should stand or fall, as we were; our case not admitting it to be otherwise, because we were not coexistent with him. But we must conceive them to have been, every individual of them,

personal covenanters, each one in his own person receiving the signification of their Maker's will; and if there were reason or need of solemn restipulation, each one in his own person as it were plighting his faith, and vowing his allegiance to the celestial crown and throne. They therefore, from a self-contracted malignity, rebelled with open eyes; and though an obligation by a common head were binding; theirs, by their own act and deed must be more strongly binding; and their revolt more deeply and more heinously criminal.

The posterity of our apostate first parents have but a limited time, in this state of probation, wherein to understand the present altered state of things between them and their offended Lord: within which time, though he foresaw the malignity of very many would never be overcome by his goodness, in the ordinary methods wherein he reckoned it became him to discover and exercise it towards them, yet according to the course and law of nature he had now settled for this apostate sinful world, their course would soon be run out, and they would not have opportunity long to continue their rebellion, and obstruct his interest and designs on earth. And also, having all things ever present to his all-comprehending view, he foreknew and foredetermined that great numbers should become the captives of his grace, and that the love and blood of an Immanuel should not be lost and thrown away upon them: but that he should make them "willing in the day of his power" to fall in with gracious intendments, and their Redeemer should see his seed, and the travail of his soul, and be satisfied therein: whereas he beheld the apostate spirits of that higher order fixed in enmity, not vincible by any ordinary methods. Nor was it to be expected he should exert (in this case) his absolute power, and act *ad ultimum—to his very uttermost*, as a natural agent doth; (had he thought that fit, he could as well have prevented their revolt;) or that he should have appointed a Redeemer for their recovery, who were irrecoverable: their case at first being (probably) very parallel to their's among men, who sin "that sin against the Holy Ghost." And as things lay in divine prospect, their malicious opposition to God's designs in this world was not bounded within the narrow limits of a short human life, their natures not being subject to a law of mortality, as it is with every sinner among men; but they were beheld as continually filling this world with mischiefs, with wickednesses and miseries, and counterworking all God's glorious and merciful designs in it; even every one of them, from his first apostasy, as long as the world shall last.

Man sinned at first, being seduced, tempted, and deceived by the devil. The devils, as being their own tempters, sin had in and from them its original and first rise in the creation of God. In all *agency*, whether of good or evil, much is wont to be attributed to *this*, Who was *first* in it? In point of *good*, the blessed God hath no competitor; he is the undoubted first Fountain of all good, and is therefore acknowledged the supreme Good. In point of *evil*, (namely, moral,) there is none prior to the devil, who is therefore eminently called *the evil, or wicked one*. And as the devils were first in sin, so they led us into it, by deceiving us; the malignity of it was therefore the greater on their parts, and proportionably the less on ours. The more knowing are the more deeply guilty, the deceiver than the deceived, and deserve the more stripes. It is true that none can deserve mercy, for then it were justice, and not mercy; but though none can deserve to have mercy shewn them, they may deserve not to have it. The more a ruler is above us, and the less he needs us, the less possible it is for us to oblige him, and the more possible to disoblige and offend him, and the more heinous will the offence be: therefore, though none can *claim* mercy, they may *forfeit* it; and will, by the deeper guilt, incur such a forfeiture, by how much the more and clearer the light and knowledge are against which they offend. And this we find to have been a measure with the blessed God, in the exercise of his mercy, even in some of the highest instances hereof that we meet with in holy Scripture; "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief," 1 Tim. 1. 13. Not that this could specify a more deserving object of mercy; for where there can be no desert at all, there can be no *more*, or *less*. But it represents the occasion and season of shewing mercy more fitly, in the estimate of the divine wisdom, which conducts the acts of sovereignty; and judges of congruities, as justice doth of right and wrong. Where indeed, among the objects of mercy, there is an absolute parity, there (as to them) mere sovereignty determines; as it may be ordinarily, in God's electing among men the objects of his free favour. Where there is no objective reason of eligibility in one more than another, especially if there be such as would rather persuade the contrary way, wisdom hath no proper exercise. But occasions are of greater latitude, and comprehend all considerable circumstances and consequences; and many things lie open to the divine eye, that are hid to ours.

But now, whereas we cannot doubt, that besides such conside-

rations as occur to us, the blessed God saw superabundant ground of not making such provision for the recovery of fallen angels, as of lost men; we can have none, whereupon to imagine the former partake not of the benefit with the latter, for want of value in the sacrifice of Immanuel. For when the blood of his cross is intimated to extend to all things both in heaven and earth; (Col. 1. 20.) to diffuse an influence through the universe; to be the cement of the creation, in what part and for what time it shall continue, subordinately to the Creator's pleasure and purposes; and that by Him, who shed it even as such, all things are said to consist: and that besides his natural right, he hath acquired, by the superabundant value of this sacrifice, (the odours whereof are spread through all worlds,) a universal dominion; and particularly, to be Head of all principalities and powers; to establish the faithful and loyal, to judge and punish the disloyal, over whom he so gloriously triumphed on the cross; (Col. 2. 15.) to have every knee bow to him, &c.: (Phil. 2. 6—11.) it cannot be, doubtless, but the value of the same sacrifice had sufficed to obtain a power, as well as to govern and judge all, to establish and reward the good, to punish the bad; to have obtained that, upon terms, pardon and mercy might have reached down into the infernal regions, if they that inhabit them could upon other accounts have been thought a pardonable or tractable sort of delinquents. And if we cannot apprehend this great Sacrifice to want value even to make atonement for devils, we can as little think it should want value to save

The *impenitent and unbelieving among men, under the gospel;* and that it must therefore also be for some other reason, that such perish. As,

If there be any thing of reason in what hath been discoursed concerning the state of the lapsed angels, the continuance of men in wilful impenitency and infidelity partly *supposes*, partly *makes*, the state of things with them the same.

Partly *supposes* it so. For it implies they have been applied to and treated with personally, upon the terms of the second covenant; that is, the covenant of God in Christ, as the apostate angels were upon the first. And if the guilt of the former apostates were so horridly great upon this account, the guilt of the latter must be proportionably so on the same account.

Partly *makes* it the same. For hereby, as the angels were violators first and immediately in their own persons of the *first* covenant, so are men of the *second*. For, generally, they

that live under the gospel are professed covenanters; and if they were not, they could not but have become obliged to have been so, by the very proposal and tender thereof unto them; or, as soon as the mind of Him who made them, concerning this matter, was known. They were not obliged by their own consent, but they were obliged to it, and by an incomparably greater and deeper obligation; not by their *own* act and deed, but by *His* who gave them breath. What is their authority over themselves, compared with that of the Supreme Lawgiver? A mere borrowed subordinate thing, without and apart from him, without whom their being itself were mere nothing! An argument *ad hominem*, is convictive, in disputation, between one man and another; but how much more overpowering means of conviction will there be in the judgment of the great day! And the parity of cases between the angels that fell, and insolent sinners under the gospel, is intimated as monitory to the latter, in those texts of Scripture that speak of God's most just and terrible severity to the former; namely, the sin of both was apostasy, according to the different covenants or laws under which they stood. For as the one sort were apostates from God, so the others were from Christ, denying the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. And again, "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ," Jude 4. Whereupon, this example of God's vengeance upon the angels that fell is subjoined in both places. Besides what was *common* to them with the apostate angels, there were some things *peculiar* to these wilful refusers of the grace of the gospel, and violators of the gospel-covenant. As,

That the guilt of wilful sinners under the gospel admits of *this* aggravation above that of the rebelling angels, that they offend against the grace of the remedy, never offered to the other; treading under foot the Son of God, profaning the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, as an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10. 29. And,

That the *offer itself*, made to them, carried in it a manifest signification of their (remote) claimable right to the benefits of the gospel-covenant, on supposition of their compliance with the terms of it, (unto which the fallen angels could have no pretence,) barred only by their non-acceptance or refusal, which appears in the general tenor of the gospel-covenant itself: "Ho, every one that thirsts"—"Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely"—"God so

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish."—And it is here to be noted, that a secret intention gives not a claimable right, but some overt-act or deed; and it must be claimable, before it ought to be claimed or accepted. This is the case then with the wilfully impenitent and rebellious under the gospel, that it may be truly said to them, "You might have had pardon and eternal life, if you had not rejected the kindest offers." It is not therefore want of value in this sacrifice, but their rejection, whence it is unavailable to them. As for them that could never have the gospel, or infants incapable of receiving it, we must consider the holy Scriptures were written for those that could use them, not for those that could not; therefore to have inserted into them an account of God's methods of dispensation towards such, had only served to gratify the curious and unconcerned, not to instruct or benefit such as were concerned. And it well became hereupon the accurate wisdom of God, not herein to indulge the vanity and folly of man.

2. Now let it hereupon be considered, in what way was this to be done; not otherwise than by enacting and publishing a *universal law*, that whosoever should comply with such and such terms, expressed in that law, (as, for instance, repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ,) should be actually and finally pardoned and saved. And this being now the plain state of the case, let any sober, unprejudiced mind make a judgment of it, what this matter would come to, if there had not been a compensation made, as a foundation to this law, and the publication of it. They that exalt one divine perfection, to the diminution of several others; that, for instance, so plead for the absoluteness and sovereignty of God's mercy, as not to adjust therewith the determinations of his wisdom, purity, righteousness, forget that they hereby make any satisfaction by a Redeemer unnecessary, (and by consequence make Christ, whom they cannot deny to have suffered and died, being innocent, to have died in vain,) nor do allow in their own thoughts its just weight to this state of the case,—that the method in which God was to exercise his pardoning mercy, was by publishing an edict for that purpose, that was to extend all the world over, and through all the successions of time. They know this is the course the wisdom of God hath pitched upon, and yet, taking the case as it is, would have this large, universal tenor of the gospel to proceed upon no foregoing compensation. The great God requires it should be proclaimed to all the world,

"Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters"—"Whosoever believes shall not perish, but have life everlasting"—"If the wicked turn from all the sins he hath committed, he shall not die: all his transgressions shall not be mentioned"—"Repent, so your iniquities shall not be your ruin"—"Come to me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—"Go, preach the gospel to every creature; whosoever believes shall be saved." This is the known tenor of the gospel, directed without limitation to all the ends of the earth; "Look to me, and be saved; all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men." That gospel which determines that whosoever believes shall be saved, is directed to be preached to all nations. He did first, by his angels from heaven, indefinitely proclaim, "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men:" and pursuant hereto was the commission given by our ascending Lord to his apostles and ministers that should succeed to the end of the world. Now suppose that without reference to, or mention any where made of this compensation to the justice of God, there must be an offer made of such mercy, not to present delinquents only, but to all, in all future times and ages!

With what methods of government would such a course as this agree? I the rather insist upon this, both as apprehending it to have its own great weight, and that perhaps it hath escaped the consideration of the most, in treating of this important subject; yet, what is more obvious? It is one thing for a prince, by a private act of grace, to pardon a particular person that hath offended him without insisting upon any recompense; another thing to do it to a multitude, not only that had now transgressed, but that should do so in any future time. Lighter minds may perhaps at first sight reckon this would only so much the more magnify the mercy of God above that of man, "whose ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts." And so indeed doth the way he hath taken for the pardoning of sin infinitely exceed all human thought, Isa. 55. 6—8. But we must take heed of being so inconsiderately officious, as to prescribe him ways of exalting one attribute, to the depressing of another; and so to set him above men in one respect, as to throw him in another below himself, yea and below men too: that, is not more to set him above them in point of mercy, than beneath them in point of governing wisdom and righteousness. And if any would be so insolent to prescribe to him, they might have thought the inconvenience of such a universal edict might have been avoided, by his sending an angel, or affording some particular revelation to

every man he would have turn to him, and repent. But were it dutiful so to correct his way of dispensation? And consider how this way he hath chosen would square with the ordinary measures of government, without the foundation laid which we are asserting. That prince would certainly never be so much magnified for his clemency and mercy, as he would be despised by all the world for most remarkable defects of government, that should not only pardon whosoever of his subjects had offended him, upon their being sorry for it, but go about to provide a law that should obtain in his dominions, through all after-time, that whosoever should offend against the government, with whatsoever insolency, malignity, and frequency, if they repented, they should never be punished, but be taken forthwith into highest favour. Admit that it had been congruous to the wisdom and righteousness of God, as well as his goodness, to have pardoned a particular sinner, upon repentance, without satisfaction; yet nothing could have been more apparently unbecoming him, than to settle a universal law, for all future time, to that purpose; that let as many as would in any age, to the world's end, affront him ever so highly, invade his rights, trample his authority, tear the constitution of his government, they should, upon their repentance, be forgiven, and not only not be punished, but be most highly advanced and dignified.

And though he hath, upon the recompense made him by his Son for all this injury, declared he will do all this; they accepting their Redeemer and Saviour for their Ruler and Lord, and returning to their state of subjection and duty to himself, in him; yet it were enough to make the world tremble and fall astonished at his foot-stool, to have peace and reconciliation offered them only upon such terms; and to behold God's own Son made a sacrifice to his justice, and a public spectacle to angels and men, for the expiation of the wrong done; and enough to make all men despair of ever finding such another sacrifice, if they should reject the terms upon which only the value and meritoriousness of this can be available for them. They can never, after this, have pretence to think it a light matter to offend God, or to think that he looks with indifferency upon sin, or counts it a small matter. And suppose it possible a single delinquent might have been pardoned, without such atonement made for his offence; the design of God's unbounded mercy not being so narrow, but so vastly comprehensive as to require the settling of a stated course for the reducing and saving of lost souls, in all times

and ages; since a Redeemer of so high dignity was to be constituted for this purpose: it had been an inexpressible injury to him, a detraction from the kindness of his undertaking and the authority of his office, that any thing of mercy should be shewn in this kind, but in him and by him alone.

But that it may be further understood how requisite it was such atonement should be made, such a sacrifice offered, for the sins of men, in order to God's settling his temple and presence with them; we were to consider, not only what was to be remitted, which we have done, but also what was to be communicated, namely, his blessed Spirit, in pursuance of the same gracious purpose; which remains to be done in what follows in chap. ix.

CHAP. IX.

We proceed to consider, Secondly, What is to be vouchsafed: namely, the gift or communication of the Spirit. 1. The gospel the means of of it. 2. The inseparable connexion hereof with the former, the imparting of righteousness for removing the guilt of sin. 3. In what sense the Holy Spirit of God is said to be given or communicated. 4. What personal union signifies. 5. How personal presence, vital union, and communicated influences, concern the inquiry. 6. In what respect the necessity asserted of this communication. 7. Since there is such fulness of Spirit in Immanuel, purposely for communication, how comes it to pass that he thereby raises no more such temples? 8. The necessity of this communication for this purpose represented two ways; by shewing, (1.) That the holy Scripture teaches that God doth give his Spirit, though under distinct notions, only through Christ. (2.) That it was most reasonable, and therefore necessary it should be so.—The doctrine of Scripture herein proposed under six heads.

WHEREAS there could be no restoration of this temple of God with men (as hath been shewn) without the concurrence of these two things—the remission of sin, and the emission of the Holy Spirit: and that it was undertaken to shew, that these were so great things, as that the wisdom of God judged it not meet to vouchsafe them in another way, than by constituting the Immanuel invested with a full power, by his own acquisition, in an unexceptionable, legal way, to dispense, and effect both of them; whereupon, as we have seen, this constitution was abundantly sufficient, so it now also must appear necessary, for this purpose. Having endea-

voured to evince this necessity concerning the former of these, *remission of sin*, upon consideration of the vast amplitude and the peculiar way of this remission: we are now,

Secondly, to shew it concerning the latter; namely, the emission or communication of the Holy Spirit.

The rich sufficiency of Immanuel, so constituted, as to be furnished with this power of giving the Spirit, hath already been seen, and that in a two-fold respect; namely, both in respect of the end of its communication, that the indisposed, unwilling heart of man might be prepared and made willing again to receive the divine presence; and in respect of the way wherein it was to be communicated; namely, in a way suitable to man's intelligent nature, by representation of the glorious object by which his soul was to be impressed. Immanuel himself, represented as the *original, exemplary Temple;* and also represented as *made a Sacrifice:* as was discoursed ch. v. Whereby the two purposes are answered, mentioned ch. vi. sec. 1. For which it was requisite this constitution of Immanuel should be, and should be declared and made known to us: that the blessed God might, upon terms not injurious to himself, give his own consent: and might, in a way not unsuitable to us, gain ours. Both which he is graciously pleased to assume to himself, for his part, in his transactions with us about this matter; leaving it for our part, being so assisted, to consider what is represented to us: and thereupon, actually to give our own consent.

1. Whereupon we are not to look upon the gospel of the Son of God as a useless or unnecessary thing. It is the ministration of spirit and life, (2 Cor. 3. 6.) and the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; (Rom. 1. 16.) an apt instrument of such impressions upon the spirits of men as are necessary to their being formed into living temples; the sword of the Spirit. Not that any good work is wrought by the inanimate gospel: the letter kills; but it is the Spirit that gives life, 2 Cor. 3. An instrument comes under the general notion of means, which signify somewhat middle between the efficient and the effect. And suppose an agent able effectually to use them; a sword is a fit instrument for its proper use, supposing a hand able to wield it.

The communication therefore of the Spirit is what we are principally now to consider. And as the constitution of Immanuel was sufficient, in its own kind, and for its own proper purpose, in this restoration; so we are to shew the necessity of it, for this same purpose.

2. There ought to be a concurrence of these two, in the Cause, the Restorer, of this temple; namely, a fulness of righteousness, to be so imparted as that it may be a ground upon which sin may be forgiven; and a fulness of Spirit, from whence vital influence may be communicated and transfused.

Inasmuch, as it is most evident, there cannot but be a connexion of what is correspondent thereto in the effect, namely, the temple itself restored, it must be full of life, 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. For can it be thought that the righteousness of the Son of God should ever be the clothing of a carcass? Without union to Christ, no man can have either: neither his righteousness nor his indwelling Spirit. Nor can they be separable, with reference to the designed end. It is an unsupposable thing, that one should be God's temple enlivened, and animated by his own Spirit, and yet be under remaining guilt, and liable every moment to his consuming wrath; or that he could be any whit the better, to have all his former guilt taken off, and be still "dead in trespasses and sins!" Wherefore this latter is of equal necessity. Hither therefore we have reserved the larger discourse we intended of the gift or communication of the Spirit, as the most proper place for it. And by way of preparation hereto, it is necessary to consider,

3. How or in what sense the Spirit is said to be given at all, or communicated; or to say somewhat of the true import of the phrase *giving the Spirit*. It is evident, that whereas giving imports some sort of communication, there is yet a sense wherein that blessed Spirit is, to any creature, simply incommunicable. There is a περιχώρησις, or mutual *in-being*, of the sacred persons in the Godhead, which is most peculiar to themselves, not communicable to creatures with them; and which is natural and necessary, not gratuitous, and whereto therefore the notion of *gift* no way agrees. We cannot yet be ignorant, that because the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the *Spirit of God*, sometimes the *Spirit of Christ*, some bold, assuming enthusiasts, upon pretence of being possessed of this Spirit, have taken the liberty of uttering "great swelling words of vanity," and to talk of being godded with God, and christed with Christ. Yet, because the expressions of giving the Spirit, of receiving, of having the Spirit, of our being in the Spirit, and of his being and dwelling, or abiding in us, are phrases of known and frequent use in Scripture; whether in relation to extraordinary purposes and operations, peculiar to some, or to ordinary, common to all that are sincere in the

Christian church: such expressions are therefore by no means to be rejected or disused; but cautiously used, and understood in a sound and sober sense. We find no difficulty in apprehending how God is said to give any thing diverse or distinct from himself; as houses, lands, riches, &c.: when in the mean time we will confess it not so easy to conceive of his giving what is within the verge of Deity, or that is of and belonging to himself. *Some* have thought, that by the Spirit given, we are to understand the operations and effects of the Spirit, *extraordinary*, as of prophecy, working miracles, &c. and *ordinary*, (which concern our present purpose,) the graces, habits, acts, and influences of the Spirit. *Others*, finding it so expressly said of the Spirit himself, spoken of as a person, that he shall be given, he shall abide with, and shall or doth dwell with or in you; (John 14. 15, 16. Rom. 8. in divers verses of those chapters;) have thought it too diminishing, and beneath the sense of those places, to understand them of any thing less than the very person of the Spirit. And *Some*, reckoning the particle *in* to import union, have therefore incogitantly spoken of a personal union between the Holy Spirit and believers. *Others*, more cautiously, of his indwelling, personal presence in them; as a greater thing, and more answerable to the letter of such texts, than their only having in them his graces or gracious influences. If any one may adventure to give a censure and judgment upon all this, and to shew,

4. What personal union signifies, I conceive that if any will make use of metaphysical terms, they should take them in the sense wherein metaphysicians use them; which they do not, who speak of a *personal union* between Christ, or the Spirit of Christ and believers. For by personal union is never wont to be meant a union of one person with another, but a union of the singular nature with this peculiar manner of subsistence, whereby is constituted one person; that is, that by personal union is meant, not the subjects of union, as if it only signified that several persons remaining distinct were yet some way or other united with one another; which, so taken, were a very lax expression, and which, according to the various capacities persons may admit of, would be of vast extent, and may reach to domestical, political, and I know not how many more unions; which cannot but be much beneath what such men must be understood to intend: but that expression, *personal union*, means the result of union, whereby the mentioned two become one person. And therefore they that speak in this stricter and more proper sense of personal union of the Spirit

and believers, do most unwarily assert a nearer union between the Spirit and believers than that of the sacred persons in the Godhead with each other. For they who acknowledge them one in Godhead, do yet as commonly deny them to be one person, and assert them to be ever three distinct persons: and this must be as much above what such men will avow and stand by. Therefore that expression can, in this case, admit no tolerable sense at all, distinctly expressive of any thing that can be truly meant by it. But,

5. How do personal presence, vital union, and communicated influences, concern the subject? for,

(1.) *That*, of a *personal indwelling presence*, can by no means be denied. The plain import of many texts of Scripture is so full to this purpose, that to take them otherwise, exclusively of this, is not to *interpret* Scripture, but *deny* it.

(2.) Yet this expression of a *personal indwelling presence*, taken alone, doth not signify any peculiar distinguishing privilege of believers from others; but what is common to all men and creatures. For can we acknowledge God to be omnipresent, and deny it of any person of the Godhead? Therefore, the Spirit's personal presence alone doth not distinguish believers from others, even though we suppose that presence to be ever so intimate: God is all, and in all, more inward or intimate to us than we are to ourselves; an assertion carrying its own evidence so fully in itself, as easily to be transferred from the Pagan academy to the Christian church, so as generally to obtain in it.

(3.) That therefore such as speak of the Spirit's being present, by his gracious influences, operations, and effects, suppose his personal presence, from which they can no more be severed, than the beams from the body of the sun. The way of divine operation being also by an immediateness both *virtutis & suppositi*, of both *power and person*, as it is commonly, and fitly enough, wont to be spoken.

If any therefore should speak of the Spirit's personal presence, as secluding gracious effects wrought thereby, they do not herein say a greater thing than the others, but much less. For though there cannot be any gracious effects without the present person of the Spirit, yet we all know he may be personally present where he produces no such effects: it is therefore his being so present, as to be the productive cause of such blessed effects, that is any one's peculiar advantage. It is very possible to have the personal presence of some great and munificent personage, and be nothing the better for it, if

his favour be shut up towards me. It is only his communicative presence that I can be the better for, which depends upon free good-will.

(4.) It is therefore only the free, gracious presence of the Spirit, that can be the matter of gift and of promise; not that which is necessary, or impossible not to be, which is peculiar and distinguishing. Mere personal presence, as the divine essence itself, is every where, by necessity of nature, not by vouchsafement of grace; and therefore no way comports with the notion of giving, or of promise.

(5.) Therefore giving the Spirit imports, in the full sense of it, two things:

[1.] Somewhat real, when he vouchsafes to be in us, as the spring and fountain of gracious communications, influences, and effects, which are most distinct from himself. For the cause is uncreated: the effect is the new creature, with whatsoever was requisite to produce, sustain, improve, and perfect it; though so like its cause, in nature, as to bear its name. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John 3. 6. And because he is said to be in Christians, who are truly such, and they in him; which are words very expressive of union; that union is most properly vital, as whereof holy life is the immediate result: "I live, yet not I, but Christ" (that is, by his Spirit) "liveth in me." Nor, otherwise, could such be living temples, animated from Immanuel.

[2.] Somewhat relative, the collation of a right to such a presence, for such purposes; which hath no difficulty. We easily conceive how the meanest persons may, by vouchsafement, have relation to, and interest in, the greatest; so God gives Himself, his Son, his Spirit, to them that covenant with him, as we also take the Father, Son, and Spirit, to be our God; as the baptismal form signifies. And when we so covenant, then hath this *giving* its full and complete sense. And now, having thus far seen in what sense the blessed Spirit of God may be said to be given or communicated, we come next briefly to shew, as the other intended premise,

6. In what respect we are here, pursuantly to the drift and design of the present discourse, to affirm a *necessity*, in reference to this communication. It may admit a twofold reference: backward, to the constitution of Immanuel, on which it depends;—forward, to the restoration of God's temple, which depends on it. There was a consequent, moral necessity of this communication; upon what the Immanuel was, did, suffered, and acquired. There was an antecedent, natural

necessity of it, in order to what was to be effected, and done by it. In the former respect, it was necessary in point of *right*, as it stood related to its meriting cause. In the latter respect, it was necessary *in fact*, as it stood related to its proper designed effect, which could only be brought about by it. In short; the communication of the Spirit was necessary to the restoring of this temple. The constitution of Immanuel was necessary to the communication of the Spirit.

This *former necessity* hath, in great part, been evinced already, in representing the ruinous state of God's temple among men, when Immanuel undertook the reparation of it; and in treating of his abundant rich *sufficiency* for this undertaking. Yet, there will be further occasion to say more of it in the progress of the following discourse; the other will more directly come under our consideration in what follows; wherein, however, we must have reference to both promiscuously, pursuantly to what hath been said.

For as we have shewn, that the immense fulness of both righteousness and Spirit, treasured up in Immanuel, could not but be abundantly sufficient for the purpose of restoring God's temple; and have also shewn, that his fulness of righteousness was in order to the remission of sin, as well necessary, as sufficient, to the same purpose; so it remains further to be shewn, that his fulness of Spirit, as it was sufficient, so is the emission or immission of it also necessary, for that part it was to have in this restoration. And that the whole course of divine dispensation, in restoring of this temple, imports a steady comportment with this necessity in both the mentioned kinds of it. Therefore, the Immanuel being the procurer of this restoration, as this may fitly be styled the temple of Christ, or of God in him; so the Spirit, being the immediate actor herein, is it also styled the temple of the Holy Ghost, as we find in many texts of Scripture, Eph. 2. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 3. 16. and 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. 1 Peter 2. 4, 5. which the reader may consult at leisure. And they all shew, how important and necessary a part, the blessed Spirit hath in this merciful and glorious work. As withal, it being considered what relation the Spirit bears to Christ, as he is Immanuel and Mediator between God and man; it evidently shews the necessity of his being constituted and made such, in order to the Spirit's part herein.

God's own judgment is the surest measure to direct ours of what was necessary, in this case. And so far as the ground of his judgment is, by himself, made visible to us, we are neither

to put out our own eyes, nor turn them away from beholding it. We are to reckon it always safe and modest to follow him, by an obsequious, ductile judgment of things apparent, and which he offers to our view, or appeals to us about them. To go before him by a preventive judgment of the secret things that belong to him or pretend to give reasons, or an account of his matters, where he gives none himself, argues rashness, arrogance, and self-confidence, whereof we can give no account. But our judgment may be truly said to follow his, when he having in his word declared his choice of such a course, which he steadily pursues in his consequent dispensations; we thereupon conclude that course to be most fit, and that what he judged most fit, was to him (as formerly we have insisted) necessary. Therefore may we with just confidence undertake to shew,

That his declared, chosen, constant course of giving the Spirit, for restoring his temple with men, is to do it in and by Christ, or Immanuel, the constituted Mediator between God and man. And that it was apparently reasonable and becoming of himself so to do.

Whereby the necessity will appear, both of his giving the Spirit, for the restoring of his temple; and of his settling the constitution of Immanuel, or such a Mediator, in order to the giving his Spirit.

Only, before we proceed more distinctly to discourse these things, it seems requisite to consider and discuss a difficulty, which may give great amusement to the minds of many, namely,

7. That since, by the drift and tendency of this discourse, it would appear, that the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us, hath by his own dear purchase, a fulness of Spirit in him for this blessed work; and now hath it in his power to raise temples every where at his pleasure, That yet so great a part of the world is still desolate, full of idols' temples; yea, the visible temple of God full of idols, destitute of the divine Spirit, under the poisonous influence of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the hearts of the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. and ἐνεργοῦντος—*by an efficacious energy*, as the word there used emphatically signifies. For what hath that accursed spirit more power to destroy, than the Son of God, manifested to dissolve and destroy the works of the devil; and his blessed Spirit have to save?

Some considerations tending to disamuse men's minds about

this matter, may make way for our clearer and less-interrupted progress in the following discourse. Therefore consider,

(1.) That the raising up of temples to God in the souls of men, with the dispossessing of that wicked one, must by no means be understood to be the work of mere power; as if no other excellency of the divine Being were concerned in it. Nor is it fit to say (as elsewhere is insisted) that God can do every thing that almighty power can do. Almighty power gives us not an adequate notion of God. He is every other excellency as well as power; and can do nothing but what agrees with every other perfection of his nature, wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, &c. as well as his power.

(2.) The Son of God, Immanuel, having obtained an infinite fulness of power to reside in himself, cannot be expected to exert it to the utmost, as natural, unintelligent agents do. But so far as is suitable to the proper ends of his undertaking, and the office which he bears.

(3.) It ought to be deeply considered, as a truth both of clearest evidence and great importance, (though perhaps it may have escaped the thoughts of many,) that the principal end of our Lord's undertaking and office, was not the salvation of men, but the glory of God. This is that whereupon his design did ultimately terminate. The other he could only intend secondarily, and as a means to this; otherwise, he would make the creature his chief end, and place upon it a most appropriate divine prerogative, to be the last, as he is the first, to all things: which is said of the great God, in reference to this very case, the saving of some, and rejecting of others. In contemplation whereof, the apostle, crying out, O the depth! asserts God's absolute liberty, as debtor to no man, (Rom. 11. 33—35.) and subjoins the true reason hereof, That of him, and by him, and to him, are all things, that to him might be glory, &c. This is the avowed design of our Lord Christ's office, in both his lowest humiliation, and highest exaltation. The desire of being saved from the (approaching) hour and power of darkness vanishes, and gives place to this,—Father, glorify thy name, John 12. 27, 28. When, for his obedience to death, that of the cross, he is highly exalted—all are to confess him Lord, to the praise and glory of God. Phil. 2. 8, 11. He, who is the most competent and most rightful Judge, determines when it will be more for the glory of God, to dispossess the strong man armed, being himself the stronger, and erect that house into a temple: and when it

will most serve this his great end, to leave the strong man armed still in his possession, and finally to doom the possessor and the possessed to take their lot together. In the *former* case, there are vessels unto honour, framed by his own hand, to the praise of the glory of grace, Eph. 1. 6. In the *latter*, vessels unto dishonour, to glorify his power, by making known his wrath and just resentments. For that honourable purpose, none are of themselves fit; but he makes them meet (Col. 1. 12.) for that glorious state, before he makes them partakers of it: but none serve the dishonourable use, but who are, of themselves, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, Rom. 9. 22. Our Lord was faithful as a Son; and was therefore content to die upon a cross, that he might, in a way against which the strictest justice should not reclaim, obtain to himself a power of giving an apostate world a time of trial; and as men should acquit themselves, by complying or not complying with his methods, glorify the Father, whose glory he sought, as being sent by him, and vindicate the rights of the divine government, both in them that are "saved, and in them that perish."

(4.) But it may gain us further advantage, to consider the great God doth not pursue ends, as we are wont to do, who commonly apprehend ourselves to stand in need of the things we pursue as our ends. But he acts agreeably to his self-sufficient fulness, who dwells not in temples made with hands, nor in any human temple, "as if he needed any thing, seeing he gives to all life and breath, and all things;" (Acts 17. 25.) and expects hereupon, that men should seek after him:—as nothing is more fit, than that indigency and necessity should crave and supplicate unto rich and abounding fulness. Princes glory in their acquisitions, and the increased multitude of their subjects, from whom they have an increase of power, and the ampler revenues. They glory in receiving; He in giving, in making his diffusive goodness flow among his creatures. Nor hath he any cause to be anxious about the event, or how his communications are received; beholding always, with infinitely higher complacency, the perfect rectitude of his own dispensations, than their felicity, though he take a secondary pleasure in that too, when it is the result of the former. He glories, as he requires us to do, (Jer. 9. 24.) that he exerciseth loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, because in those he delighteth.

(5.) Though the goodness and loving-kindness of God be immense, and without limit; yet, the exercise of it is within

certain limits, which annexed judgment or the most exquisite wisdom prescribes to it. He waits to be gracious—and because he is the God of judgment, they are blessed that wait for him, Isa. 30. 18. There is a critical season and nick of time, which men are concerned to wait for; and because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore is the misery of men great, Eccl. 8. 6. For man also knows not his time, *ch.* 9. 12. The most perfect wisdom hath drawn out a certain verge, within which the most special goodness confines, ordinarily, its communications: otherwise, what means that, —if thou continue in his goodness? Rom. 11. 22. with that of Jude 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. While we converse with the ever Blessed One, within the region of his own love and goodness, imbibing, and taking in his free and gracious communications, and still craving and expecting more, we keep within the sacred vital circle and inclosure; without which, is darkness and the shadow of death. We breathe in the element of life, by grateful aspirations, and respirations, that cannot be unpleasant to ourselves, but must be infinitely more pleasant to him; who reckons it a more blessed thing to give than to receive. We are always to remember, that our state is that of expectants: that we keep ourselves in the love of God, looking, waiting, always onward, until we attain eternal life. Our waiting hath the annexed promise of blessedness, as above, Isa. 30. 18. and Prov. 8. 34. And is most becomingly required, as a just homage unto sovereign goodness.

(6.) That admirable goodness of God, which shews itself in raising up temples in this vile world by the Spirit of Immanuel, claims our subordinate co-operation as under-builders in this structure; We are to work, because he works, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 12, 13. Which signifies both his liberty and delight in working. It is said, 1 Cor. 3. 9. Ye are God's building: yet, it is also said, *v.* 14. If any man's work abide, which he hath built, &c.

One of great note in the ancient Christian church, discoursing of this passage, says, ἡ οἰκοδομὴ ἐ τῦ τεχνίτυ, ἀλλα τῦ δεσπότυ. —*The building is not the artist's*, or workman's, but the Lord's, that owns it; and who is to be, as a little after he speaks, ναὸς ἡμεῖς, αυτὸς ἔνοικ⊙, (Chrysost. in 1 ad Cor.) the *inhabitant of it*. And inasmuch as we are to be living, intelligent temples, we are also to be ourselves labourers and workmen (as well as they who are to be so by special office) in this building. But

if our work be pulling down, stifling convictions, suppressing desires, fear, &c. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy, by keeping up the service of the idols' temple, and profaning his own, 1 Cor. 10. 22? or have we forgot who hath said, Vengeance is mine, even for treading under foot his Son Immanuel, and despiting his Spirit of grace, Heb. 10. 29, 30? The high pleasure the blessed God takes in his own gracious communications, gratefully received; and his just resentment and displeasure for the contemptuous refusal of them, may be understood some way to measure one another. Both may be conjectured from this text of Scripture, after such sort, as the great things of God can be conceived of, by such mean mortals. The Spirit of grace! of all kindness! love! goodness! benignity! sweetness! O the ineffable delight that blessed Spirit must take in its own effusions, tending to the recovery, the healing and saving of a lost soul, when there is an agreeable comportment therewith! But the despiting of such a Spirit! Who can conceive or apprehend, deeply enough, the horror of this crime! the thwarting the design of so compassionate goodness! or of severity, or soreness of punishment, it shall be thought worthy of!

The whole work of faith, that is, that entire work, necessary to be wrought upon the soul of a man, in order to his future felicity, and that by God's own power is called the fulfilling or satisfying, the good pleasure of his goodness, 2 Thess. 1. 11. O the plenitude of satisfaction which our blessed Lord takes in the fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness, when the methods are complied with, according whereto he puts forth his power for effecting such a work! But if we can apprehend what it is to cross a man of power in his pleasures: what is it to withstand the great God in his pleasures! even the pleasures of his goodness! His most connatural, delightful pleasures! Some estimate we can make, by supposing a wealthy, potent, wise, and good man, intent upon reclaiming a poor, wretched, undone, perverse neighbour; if his supplies and counsels be gratefully received, how pleasant is it to his benefactor! if often repeated, they are scornfully rejected, how vexing is the disappointment!

(7.) We must know, there are vincible operations of that Spirit, leading on to those that are victorious, being complied with; otherwise, to the most terrible vengeance. When it was charged upon the Jews, Acts 7. 51. that they did always resist the Holy Ghost, as their fathers did: it is implied, he was always striving, though more rarely, to victory. But

when it is said, Prov. 1. 23. Turn at my reproof, could any essay to turn, without some influence of the Spirit? But that complied with, tends to pouring forth a copious effusion, not to be withstood. The less sensible *adminicula*, the gentler *aids* and insinuations of grace, lead to what shall overcome.

(8.) Without such an overpowering effusion, man's impotency will be acknowledged, by those that understand either the Scriptures or themselves. But how perverse is the inference, that therefore they are to sit still! No; therefore to pray, cry, strive, wait, more than they that wait for the morning, until he be gracious, and shew mercy.

(9.) Therefore, for men to be destitute of the Spirit is criminal: and as much so, not to be filled with the Spirit, as to be drunk with wine: the same authority that forbids the one, enjoins the other, Eph. 5. 18.

(10.) But though it be God's ordinary method, to proceed gradually in raising temples to himself in this world, he never so binds his own hands, as not to do extraordinary acts of grace and favour, when he thinks fit; and without any danger of forcing men's wills, or offering violence to human nature: than which imagination nothing is more absurd; both because,

[1.] The forcing of a man's will, implies a contradiction in the terms; for we have no other notion of force, than the making one do a thing against his will. But it is impossible a man should will or be willing against his will. He that hath made a man's soul and all its powers, well enough knows how to govern him without violence, and by (though ever so sudden) an immission of his light and grace, effectually to change a man's will without forcing it. And also because,

[2.] No man that hath the present use of his own faculties, will think they can be injured by divine light and grace; or that they hurt the nature of man, which they manifestly tend to restore, improve, and perfect. Yet no man is to expect, that because the blessed God vouchsafes to make some rarer instances of dealing by way of sudden surprise with the spirits of men, that this should be his ordinary method; but, more usually, to awaken them into some consideration of that forlorn state, while they are destitute of the divine presence, and their souls the haunts and residence of devils, instead of temples of the Holy Ghost. And to make them know, that he counts the gift of his Son, and Spirit, too great things to be

despised, or not earnestly sought; after he hath given hope of their being attained; or that the neglect thereof should not have a very terrible vindication: letting men feel that the despising the riches of his goodness, which gently leads to repentance, is nothing else but "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath," and the revelation of his righteous Judgment. Inasmuch as he owes it to himself, to let them know that the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, needs not seek to them for a house, Isa. 66. 1, 2. And as to what in ordinary course, he judges necessary (lest men should in all this be thought justly querulous) he appeals to themselves, Isa. 5. 4. What could I have done more? Are not my ways equal? Ezek. 18.

8. Whereupon we now proceed to shew the two things, before intimated.

That the Holy Spirit is not otherwise given, than in or by Immanuel, or for Christ's sake; and, How necessary, or (which comes fully to the same) how highly reasonable it was in itself, and may appear to us, that so mighty a gift, and of this peculiar nature and kind, should not be vouchsafed unto men, upon other terms, or in any other way, than this.*

(1.) For the former of these; That the Spirit of God is actually given, upon this account only, his own word sufficiently assures us. And who can so truly inform us, upon what considerations he doth this, or that, as he himself? Let us then, with equal, unbiassed minds, consider the tenor and import of what we find spoken in the holy Scripture about this matter, which I conceive may be truly summed up thus, namely,

[1.] That the Holy Spirit is given to this purpose of restoring the temple of God with men, with the worship and fruitions thereof, under a twofold notion,—of a Builder, and an Inhabitant.

[2.] That He is given under both notions, or for both these purposes, for Christ's sake, and in consideration of his death and sufferings; though they have not influence to the obtaining of this gift, for both these purposes, in the same way, but with some difference, to be afterwards explained in what follows.

[3.] That it was not the immediate effect of his suffering, that this blessed Spirit should be forthwith given to this or that particular person; but that all the fulness of his grace be given into Christ's power, and the right of dispensing it, annexed

* This is considered in chap. xi. page 451.

to his office, as he is the Redeemer of sinners, and Mediator between God and them, for the accomplishing the end of his office, the ceasing of controversies, enmities, and disaffections on our part, Godward.

[4.] That hereupon, its actual communication for both the mentioned purposes, is immediately from Christ or by and through him.

[5.] That it is given by Christ, under the former notion, or for the former purpose of rebuilding God's temple, as a sovereign, or an absolute plenipotentiary in the affairs of lost souls, in a more arbitrary way, so as not to be claimable, upon any foregoing right.

[6.] That he gives it, under the latter notion, and in order to a continued abode and inhabitation, as an *oeconomus*, or the steward of the household of God proceeding herein, by fixed rule; published in the gospel, according whereto the subjects of this following communication, being qualified for it, by the former, may, with certainty, expect it upon the prescribed terms, and claim it as a right; he having, by the merit of his blood, obtained that they might do so.

CHAP. X.

I. The first of the six heads mentioned in the preceding chapter, page 415, insisted on—That the Spirit is given both as a Builder, and as an Inhabitant of this temple. 1. Scripture testimony concerning the former of those, and the latter. 2. The Spirit given for the sake of Christ's death and sufferings. 3. Anciently, the blessing of Abraham, and his seed from age to age, upon this account. 4. More copiously and to other nations, when the fulness of time was come. 5. Christ's death hath influence for these two purposes with much difference, to be afterwards explained. II. Colossians 1. 19—21. largely opened. III. A digression relating thereto. The principal import of that text, to shew the dependence Christ's whole work of reconciliation, both of God to us, and of us to God, had upon his sacrifice on the cross. The latter whereof (our reconciliation to God) is effected by his Spirit, obtained by that sacrifice. Other texts to the same purpose. IV. The subject is resumed, and it is further noted, 6. That the Spirit is expressly said to be given by Christ, or in his name, &c. 7. Given for building or preparing a temple, by a less certain, known rule.

I. NOW let us see, as to each of these, whether this be not the plain doctrine of the Scriptures in this matter.

First, For the first of these, it hath been sufficiently shewn already, and the common experience of all the world shews, that until this blessed Spirit be given, the temple of God is every where all in ruin: that therefore he cannot dwell until he build, and that he builds that he may dwell, (the case and his known design being considered,) are things, hereupon, plain in themselves, and are plainly enough spoken in Scripture. Let us therefore,

1. Consider the Scripture testimony concerning both these. When the apostle had told the Christians of Corinth, (1 Cor. 3. 9.) "Ye are God's building," he shortly after adds, (in the same chapter, *v.* 16.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" This temple, being a living thing, (as 1 Pet. 2. 5. represents it,) the very building and formation of it is, in the more peculiar sense, generating; and because it is to be again raised up out of a former ruinous state, wherein it lay dead, and buried in its own ruins, this new production is regeneration. And do we need to be put in mind whose work that is? that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth?" (John 6. 63.) or of what is so industriously inculcated by our Lord, (*ch.* 3. *v.* 3, 5, 6, &c.) and testified under the seal of his fourfold *amen*, that this new birth must be by the Spirit? And we have both notions again conjoined, Eph. 2. For having been told, (*v.* 18.) that both Jews and Gentiles have by one Spirit access to the Father, so as to be no longer strangers and at a distance, but made nigh to God; (*v.* 19. compared with *v.* 13.) it is said, (*v.* 20.) We "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone;" and again added, (*v.* 21.) "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth (as a living thing) unto an holy temple in the Lord." After all which, the end and use of this building (implied in the name of a temple) are more expressly subjoined, (*v.* 22.) "In whom also ye are builded together an habitation of God, through the Spirit." It is therefore sufficiently evident, that the Spirit is given under these distinct notions, and for these several purposes, the one subordinated to the other, namely, both as a builder and a dweller.

2. That the Spirit is given for Christ's sake, whether for the one purpose or the other, is as expressly signified as any thing in the whole gospel. For what means it, that he is said to be given *in his name?* John 14. 26. and 15. 26. and that the work he does, being given, is said to be done in his name?

1 Cor. 6. 11. "Ye are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God."

Yea, and that it is given in consideration of his sufferings and death, is not less plainly spoken: for not only are the immediate and most peculiar operations of this Spirit, ascribed to his death, (1 Pet. 2. 24.) "He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness;" but the imparting of the Spirit itself, is represented as the design and end of those sufferings, Gal. 3. 13, 14. "He was made a curse for us; for cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit," &c.

3. It was the same way, and on the same terms, upon the largeness and certainty of the divine prospect, and foresight touching Christ's future sufferings, that this was the blessing of Abraham and his posterity, long before he suffered: that God gave them, of old, his Spirit to instruct them; (Neh. 9. 20.) which is not obscurely implied, when, looking back upon the days of old, they are said to have "rebelled, and vexed his Spirit;" (Isa. 63. 9, 10.) and when Stephen tells them, (Acts 7. 51.) "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye," it is implied that even from age to age that blessed Spirit was striving with them; (children and fathers;) for there could be no resistance, where there was no striving: and that, in those former ages, that Holy Spirit was active among them upon Christ's account, and by the procurement of his future sacrifice, (presignified by their many sacrifices,) is also sufficiently intimated, in that, when it is said, That under Moses, they did eat and drink spiritual meat and drink; they are said to have drank of the rock that followed them; and it is added, that rock was Christ. And by what provocations could they be supposed more to resist and vex the Holy Spirit, than by those wherewith, in the day of provocation and temptation, they are said to have lusted in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert, (Ps. 106. 14. Ps. 78. Ps. 95. Heb. 3.) by which they are expressly said to have tempted Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 9. And certainly the privilege was inestimably great, (though they too generally little esteemed it, and made little advantage of it,) that when the most of the world besides was nothing else but waste, neglected wilderness, they should be an inclosed vineyard, under the long continued droppings and dews of heavenly influence. For it was not but upon high

and long provocation, that at last God commands his clouds to rain no more rain upon it, Isa. 5. 6. How singular a favour was it to be the appropriate plantation, vineyard, and garden of God, taken in from so vast and wild a desert! and that the God of Abraham would so long continue the relation, and be their God; to bless them with the choice of his blessings, those whereof his own Spirit was the peculiar source and spring!

4. But when the fulness of time, and the season for the actual immolation of that Sacrifice, (once for all, to be offered up,) was now come, that the immense fulness of its value and virtue might be duly demonstrated and glorified; down goes the inclosure, which the amplitude and extensiveness of God's kind design could no longer endure: and as some time the great prophetic oracle given to Abraham, must take effect, In thy seed (and it is said, not of seeds, as of many, but of seed, as of one, namely, Christ, Gal. 3. 16.) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; this is the time. Now must the blessing of Abraham come upon the Gentiles. Nor could any time have been more fitly chosen, that the copiousness and vast diffusion of the effect, might demonstrate and magnify the power and fulness of the cause, and even lead the eyes of all unto it. The drawing, so generally of all men, was that which must dignify the cross, and incite all eyes to behold and adore the Son of man lifted up, John 12. 32. and in the midst of death, even with his dying breath, sending forth so copious, and far-spreading a diffusion of spirit and life! And now had it only been said loosely and at large, that this was brought about by his dying, that might admit a great latitude of sense, and give some room for sinister interpretation. The intendment of the expression might be thought sufficiently answered, if, in any way, his dying did occasion good impressions upon the minds of men. But when the effect is expressly ascribed to his dying so, as the cause, that is, to his being lifted up, to his being made a curse in dying, by hanging on a tree, and a curse for us to redeem us thereby from the legal curse which lay upon us before; the curse of the law, the doom which the violated law laid upon us, of having (as is apparently meant) the Spirit withheld from us, that thereupon the great and rich blessing might come upon us, of having that holy Spirit freely, and without further restraint, communicated to us; this puts the matter out of all dispute, that it was in consideration of his dying, that God now gives his Spirit, and leaves no place for contending against it unto any,

who have not more mind to object, than they can have pretence for it.

It is then, the plain doctrine of the Scriptures, that the Spirit is given for the restoring of God's temple with men, for the sake of Christ's death and suffering, who was Immanuel, and, in his own person, the *original temple*, out of which, each single temple was to arise and spring up, as well as he was the *exemplary temple*, unto which they were all to be conformed.

5. But whereas his sufferings and death have their influence *differently*, to the Spirit's *building* of any such particular secondary temple, and to his *replenishing* and *inhabiting* it: that difference we shall find is not inexplicable or very difficult to be represented according to the tenor of the Scriptures also. In order whereto it will be of use to add,—That, as the immediate effect of his sufferings and death, the Spirit in all the fulness thereof, is first given into his power, and the right of communicating it annexed to his office, as he is the Immanuel, the Redeemer of sinners, and Mediator between God and them; that it might implant what was necessary, and root out what should be finally repugnant, either to their duty towards him or their felicity in him.

That this was the end of his office, the very notion of a mediator between God and men, doth plainly intimate; (1 Peter 3. 18.) "For Jesus Christ himself suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Which must signify not only that he was to render God accessible, expiating by his blood our guilt; but also, to make us willing to come to him, vanquishing by his Spirit, our enmity procured also by his suffering, the just for the unjust, without both we could not be brought to God, which was, we see, the end of his suffering.

II. Here we are to open Col. 1. 19, 20. That all fulness did, upon his suffering, reside in him, for this purpose is as plainly signified by that remarkable connexion, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell—and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself." *The Father* is not in the original text, (the verb being left impersonal,) but is fitly and necessarily understood; for whose pleasure can this be supposed to be, but the Father's? And so the current of discourse doth thus run smooth. "The Father was pleased that all fulness should dwell in him, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by

him to reconcile all things to himself; even by him: for that is inculcated a second time. It was judged necessary to this reconciling design, that all fulness should dwell in him. But who did thus judge? The Father was pleased it should be so; but upon what consideration? "having made peace by the blood of his cross." The same *He*, that was pleased all fulness should dwell in him, was so pleased, as having made peace by the blood of his cross; for the syntax cannot admit that εἰρηνοποίησας should be spoken of the Son; but the Father (as agent, agreeably to that 2 Cor. 5. 18. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ") having made peace; or pitched upon this method, and laid this foundation of making peace (for it is usual to speak of a thing as done, when it is put into a sure way of being so) by the blood of his Son's cross, was now content that all fulness should dwell in him, to be diffused by him, through the world, in order to his having temples prepared, inhabited, replenished with divine glory every where; not in heaven only, which was already full of them, or where it was easy to suppose he might find such temples ready prepared in all quarters; but even on earth also, where all was waste and desolate, nothing to be seen but forlorn ruins.

III. And, by the way, (that we may make some, not unuseful, *digression*,) it is very ordinary in Scripture, to join things in the same period, as if they were of equal concernment, when, though they are mentioned together, their concernment is very different, and the main stress is intended to be laid but on the one of them; the other being placed there, either as an opposite, the more to illustrate and set off that with which it is joined; or as an introduction, a thing supposed, and which had place already, unto which the other is more principally necessary to be added; and then is the form of speech, manifestly, elliptical, but so, as that to considering readers it is easy to apprehend what is to be supplied. As when the apostle speaks thus, (Rom. 6. 17.) "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;" doth the apostle intend to thank God for their having been the servants of sin? No man can think so. But that, whereas, or notwithstanding, they had been so, (which was the thing to be supplied,) they did now obey, &c. So that (John 3. 5.) "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It was certainly none of our Saviour's design to assert the absolute, universal, necessity of

washing with water, equally, with being born of the Spirit; but whereas it was the known manner among the Jews to admit proselytes to their religion, by baptism (which was then reckoned as a new birth) his design was, without rejecting that as useless, (which he intended to continue in the Christian church,) to represent the greater, and most indispensable necessity, of being born of the Spirit, added to the other, and that without this, the other alone would avail nothing. When again it is said, (James 1. 9, 10.) "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low;" it cannot be thought, that both these were equally intended to be enjoined; but the former is supposed, as a thing that would be naturally, and of course; *Let him*, as if he had said, admit he do, or he may, or it is taken for granted that he will rejoice, who, being of low degree, is exalted. But the principal design is to shew, what it is less obvious to apprehend or imagine, that the rich hath a truer cause and greater reason to rejoice when he is made low; because he was, otherwise, apt to please himself, or be mocked with a shadow. Many more such instances might be given of two things thus joined together in the same assertion, or sometimes, in the same precept, where the intendment is to make use of the one, either by way of opposition, or comparison, the more to magnify, or to lay the greater weight on the other.

The matter may well be so understood in the place under our present consideration; "by him to reconcile all things to himself," (things being put for persons, as elsewhere in holy Scripture, Luke 19. 10. 1 John 5. 4. and commonly in other writers,) "whether things on earth, or things in heaven;" that is, even as well men on earth, where the difficulty was greater, and where enmity against God did rage, where he was set at greatest distance and highest defiance; as those in heaven, where all was pacate already, and therefore a word was chosen more suitable to the state of their case, who were principally intended, namely, of reconciling; meaning that, by reconciliation, he would make the state of things on earth, now so filled with enmity against God, suitable to their state above, among whom there was none: and yet a word not wholly incongruous to the heavenly state also; for ἀποκαλλάττειν, doth not always suppose a *foregoing enmity*, as καταλλάττειν (used 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20.) doth not always; nor doth the decompound here more limit the sense; but doth sometimes signify to *conciliate*, or draw into society, and may, in reference to that

state above, have reference to the continuation of amity and accord there; that no more any such rupture, as once there was, should have place in those bright regions for ever. And it seems designed for the Redeemer's more consummate glory, that the perpetual stability of the heavenly state, should be owing to him, and to the most inestimable value of his oblation on the cross; that it should be put upon his account, and be ascribed to the high merit of his pacificatory sacrifice, that they continue in obedience, and favour for ever! For why, else, is the mention of the "blood of his cross" so carefully inserted, and that, rather than be omitted, it is even thrust into a parenthesis: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and (having made peace by the blood of his cross) to reconcile all things to himself—on earth—in heaven!" This is the more remarkably designed; though yet, the principal import of the word *reconciled*, (as any word that is to be applied to divers matters, is differently to be understood, according to the diversity of the matter,) is accommodate to their case, who were principally intended, namely, those on earth, who were in enmity with God. And the following words shew these to have been here principally intended: "And you, who were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled," &c. (*v.* 21.) as if he had said, He hath not only conciliated to himself, or made sure of the everlasting amity of those, who were always dutiful in heaven; but he hath also recovered the good-will and loyal affection of such on earth, as were at enmity, in an apostasy, alienated, and enemies in their minds; and all, by the same means, the virtue and fragrancy of a sacrifice, sufficient to fill heaven and earth with its grateful odour, and whose efficacy can never decrease to all eternity. Nor therefore, is it consequent, that the direct intention of this his sacrifice, should bear reference to the concernments of angels, whose nature he took not, but from the redundancy of its merit, this inestimable advantage, namely, the permanent stability of their state, may well be supposed to accrue to them; and, for the greater honour of the Redeemer, they made debtors to him for it.

And why should it seem incongruous, that those most constantly pure and holy creatures above, who are, in this same context, (*v.* 16.) made to owe whatever excellencies they have, within the sphere of nature, to the Son of God, should owe to him also, whatsoever they have within the sphere of grace? Yea, how aptly do things correspond, that, whereas it had

been said above, (*v.* 16.) "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth," &c. it should also be after said, "by him are all things reconciled," either recovered into, or continued in, everlasting amity with him, that is, That whosoever partake of special divine favour, whether they be of the things on the earth, or the things in heaven, shall for the future be debtors to him for it. And whereas it is expressly said in Scripture, that "when God raised him from the dead, he set him far above all principality and power," &c. Eph. I. 20, 21. (which words ἐκάθισεν ὑπεράνω, *set him above*, not only signify constitution, a thing diverse from natural priority, but also, being conjunct with his raising him from the dead, import a reference to his dying, and conquest over death, as the reason of it,) and that "being gone into heaven—angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject to him;" (1 Peter 3. 22.) and that he being said to be "the head of all principalities and powers;" he might, by themselves, be understood not to be an useless or unbeneficial Head to them. Though it also is not to be forgotten, that at the time when the apostle wrote these words, a considerable part of that holy blessed society, then in heaven, were sometime on earth, in a state of enmity against God, and so who needed reconciliation in the strict and proper sense; as they did who were still on earth, and to whom he now more particularly directs his speech, (*v.* 21.) "And you also, who were sometimes alienated—yet now hath reconciled," &c.

But, though I could not think it an impertinency, to use some endeavour for clearing the whole of this (somewhat obscure) context, it coming, as it did, in my way, yet the principal thing, with reference to my present scope and purpose, which I consider in it, is that it was upon the account of the blood our Redeemer shed on the cross, that the Father was pleased all fulness should dwell in him, as an *original Temple*, to serve the purposes of that great reconciling-work, undertaken by him, the raising up of multitudes of temples, all sprung from this one, in this world of ours, That God might dwell with men on earth! that amazing thing! 2 Chr. 6. 18. And that ascending (in order whereto he was first, dying, to descend) that he might fill all things, give gifts, that of his Spirit especially; and that to such as were enemies in their minds, by wicked works, even the rebellious also, that the Lord God might have his temple, and dwell with them, Ps. 68. 18. And whereas that work must comprehend the working out of enmity from the hearts of men against God (and not

only the propitiating of God to them, which the word εἰρηνοποιήσας seems more principally to intend) and that a great communication of influence from the Divine Spirit, was necessary for the overcoming that enmity; that therefore this fulness must include (among other things, being πᾶν πλήρωμα, *all fulness*) an immense treasure and abundance of Spirit, (which is elsewhere said to be given him, not by measure, John 3. 34.) and that therefore his sufferings did obtain this plenitude of Spirit to be first seated in him, as the receptacle and fountain, whence it must be derived, and that the power and right of dispensing it should belong to his office, as he was the great Reconciler and Mediator between God and man. Which also many other texts of Scripture do evidently imply, as when he is represented as a universal Plenipotentiary, able to quicken whom he will, John 5. 21. And "all power is said to be given him, both in heaven and earth;" (Mat. 28. 18.) and that "the Father had given all things into his hands," (John 13. 3.) which must comprehend the power of giving the Spirit, and which the end of giving him that plenitude of power plainly requires. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him;" (John 17. 2.) the Spirit given being the root of that life, (Gal. 6. 8.) they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And that he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance, (which equally implies the gift of the Spirit) as well as remission of sins, Acts 5. 31. Nor is the consideration of his sufferings and death less plainly signified to be the ground, upon which this fulness of power is given him; when it is said, "Christ both died, and revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord of the living and the dead," Rom. 14. 9. And when, after mention of his being obedient to death, &c. it is said, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, &c." that all "should confess Christ is Lord, &c." Phil. 2. 5—11. Having made this digression, we now

IV. Resume the subject, and further note,

6. That hereupon, the Spirit (whether it be for the one or the other, of the mentioned purposes) is actually and immediately given by Christ, or by the authority of that office which he bears; than which nothing can be plainer, in that he is called the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8. 9. And when our Lord himself uses the expressions about this matter, with such indifferency and as equivalent; either "I will send him," (John 16. 7.) or, "I will send him from my Father," (John 15. 26.) or, "My Father will send him

in my name," John 14. 26. Which what can it signify less, than that, as the Father was the first Fountain of this communication, so the established way and method of it, was in and by Christ, from which there was to be no departure? as is also signified in that of the apostle, Eph. 1. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (or things) in Christ."

And when we consider, how exact care is taken in well-ordered secular governments, not only that things be done which the affairs of the government required; but that they be done regularly, and in the way which is prescribed and set; so as that every one knows, and attends the business of his own place and station; and that no one may expect that from the treasurer, which is to be done by the chancellor, or that from him, which belongs to the secretary of state. If there be any beauty and comeliness in order, where should we more expect to find it, than in the divine government, and in the conduct and management of the affairs of the supreme and celestial kingdom; wherein only the remoteness of those things from our sense makes every thing seem little and inconsiderable? But did we allow ourselves to retire more frequently out of this world of shadows, and ascend into those glorious regions above; there to contemplate the bright orders of holy, loyal spirits, all employed in the services of the celestial throne, and to behold Jesus the Head of all principalities and powers, the Restorer of what was sunk and decayed, and the Upholder of the whole sliding universe, even of the noblest parts of it, that were liable to the same lapse and decay; by whom all things consist; we should not think it strange that such deference and honour should belong to his office; that it should be rendered every way so august and great, that he should be so gloriously enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and that, when his administrations are manageable with so much ease and pleasure, to one of so immense wisdom, power and goodness; all acts of grace and favour, should more especially pass through his hands. And if we understand any thing of the distinction of persons in the ever blessed Deity (whereof if we understand nothing, how do we adventure to affirm any thing?) it is not more difficult to apprehend distinct employments, wherein yet, all can never fail to have their most complacential consent. And when that kind of office, was so freely undertaken by the Son;

the susception and management whereof, hath, no doubt, filled the supreme court, at first, and from age to age, with his highest celebrations and praises, and for the execution whereof, when he made his first descent into this world of ours, and was to appear an incarnate God on earth, a proclamation was published in heaven, "Now let all the angels of God worship him;" and in his execution whereof, they had, from time to time afterwards, spontaneously stooped down to behold, with pleased wonder, his surprisingly strange and prosperous methods and performances; who can think it unsuitable to the dignity and authority of so great, and so highly magnified an office, unto which all the power of heaven and earth was annexed, that it should by consent belong to it, to employ the whole agency of the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of its high and great ends?

But now, he having by his blood obtained, that this immense plenitude of Spirit should reside in him, not for himself, personally considered, (for so he had it by natural, eternal necessity, without capitulation or procurement) but as he was invested with such an office, and in order to its being, by the power of that office, communicated to others; it is easy to be conceived, and may be collected from the tenor of holy Scripture, in what different methods it was to be communicated, for the (already mentioned) different ends of that communication, namely, the rebuilding of God's temple on earth, and the constant inhabiting and replenishing it afterwards. Therefore,

7. For the former of these purposes, it is given more arbitrarily, and of more absolute sovereignty, not limited by any certain, published, or known rule; or other than what lay concealed in secret purpose. Here the first principle is given of that life which springs out, and exerts itself, in the generating, and forming of a *living temple;* which grows up into everlasting life, and makes it an eternally living thing. Now whereas he hath so vast a power given him by the Father over all flesh, (which giving, we again note, must signify this not to be the power he had by natural inherence, but by later constitution,) we do know to whom, or to what sort of persons, this eternal life, in the consummate state of it, is to be given, for that is sufficiently declared in Scripture; but we are not told to whom it shall be given in the very initial state, or in the first and seminal principle of it; that is reserved among the *Arcana Imperii, the secret resolves,* or *placita* of the divine government. And so, tak-

ing the whole of it together, (as here we must,) we are only told, He will give it to as many as the Father hath given him, John 17. 2. We do find a connexion, (Rom. 8. 30.) of predestination, calling, justification, and glorification: but not of a sinner, as such, with any of these. So observable was that of a noted ancient, (S. Jerom.) "He that hath promised pardon to a penitent, hath not (except with very great latitude) promised repentance to a sinner." To speak here more distinctly,

Ever since the apostasy, even upon the first declared constitution of a Redeemer, and in the shining forth of that first cheering ray of gospel light and grace, "the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head;" a promise was implied of the communication of the Spirit; that curse, which made the nature of man, as the accursed ground, improductive of any thing but briers and thorns; and whereby all holy, vital, influences were shut up from men, as in an inclosed, sealed fountain, being now so far reversed, for the Redeemer's sake, as that all communication of the Spirit should no longer remain impossible. And hereupon, some communication of it, in such a degree, as might infer some previous dispositions and tendencies to holy life, seems to have been general (and is therefore fitly enough wont to be called common grace) but then, in that lower degree, it is not only resistible, but too generally resisted with mortal efficacy; so as that it builds no living temples; but retiring, leaves men under the most uncomfortable and hopeless (but chosen) shades of death.

When it was said concerning the old world before the flood, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," it is implied, it had been constantly and generally striving, until then; but that it was now time, by the holy, wise, and righteous judgment of heaven, to surcease, and give them over to the destruction which ensued. Which text, it is true, some interpret otherwise; but if we will allow that of the 1 Pet. 3. 18—20. to mean that, while Noah, that preacher of righteousness, did it externally, Christ was, by his Spirit, inwardly preaching to that generation, who were, now since, in the infernal prison; not while they were so, (which the text says not,) but in their former days of disobedience on earth; this place will then much agree with the sense, wherein we (with the generality of our interpreters) take the other. Nor are we therefore to think there is no stated rule at all, in reference to this case of God's more general (but less efficacious) striving with men, by his Spirit. For we here see, that before God took any people to

be peculiar to him, from the rest of men, the reason which he gives, why his Spirit should not always strive with man, in common (after an intimation of his contemptible meanness, and his own indulgence towards him notwithstanding, and instance given of his abounding wickedness in those days) was, because all "the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually;" (Gen. 6. 3—5.) that is, that in opposition to the dictates of the blessed Spirit, he gave himself up to the power, and government of sensual inclination, his mind, or thinking, considering power and faculty, falling in with the imaginations of sense, and taking part therewith, against the Spirit of God; which imported nothing less than a continual rebelling against that Holy Spirit. Now if we consider this, as the declared reason, why God's Spirit should not always strive, and compare therewith other passages of Scripture; we may collect, and perceive there is some rule of God's proceeding, in this matter, not only settled in heaven, but sufficiently notified on earth also: that is, concerning the extent, not concerning the limitation of this gift; how far God would certainly go, in affording it, not how far he would not go. As far as it is sought, complied with, and improved; not how far he would not, in some instances, proceed, beyond that. He hath bound us to pray, strive, endeavour, but not tied his own hands from doing surprising acts of favour, above and beyond his promise.

It is plain, man had by his apostasy cut off all intercourse between God and him; not only was become regardless of it, but disentitled. It was his inclination not to converse with God; it was his doom that he should not. We have but short and dark hints of God's first transactions with men, but what was written and done afterwards, much enlightens and explains them. There was, no doubt, a much more comprehensive and substantial law, or rule of duty given to Adam, than that positive statute: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat;" that was fundamental to it, and transgressed in the violation of it, and therefore some way implied in it; and if all that *more* were only given by internal, mental impression, or was only to be collected from the thorough consideration of God's nature and his own, and of the state of things between God and him; that must have been as intelligible to his yet undepraved mind, as written tables or volumes. There must also, accordingly, be much more implied in the subjoined enforcing sanction, or rule of punishment: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death;"

than the vulgar apprehension of dying comes to; for these were the words of the commination or curse upon man, if he should transgress. And are we not plainly told, (Gal. 3. 13, 14.) "Christ hath redeemed us from that curse—that this blessing might come upon us, that we might receive—the Spirit?" Therefore, this curse did shut up the Spirit from us; and this death must signify a suspension of all vital, holy influence, a continual languishment under the stupifying power of a carnal mind, which (Rom. 8. 6.) we are expressly told is death. And when that first evangelical promise was collaterally, and implicitly given, wrapped up in the threatening to the serpent, That the woman's seed should break his head; it could mean no less, than that he, that should afterwards, in the fulness of time, become her seed, and be born of a woman, should redeem us from under that curse, and turn it, in all the consequent horrors of it, upon himself. It was therefore further plain also, that no breath of holy divine influence was ever more to touch the spirit of man, had it not been for the Redeemer's interposition, and undertaking.

But he having interposed, undertaken, and performed, as he hath; what is the effect of it? What! Is it that the Spirit should now go forth with irresistible almighty power to convert all the world? That, the event too plainly shews was not the design; or that it should immediately supply men with sufficient grace and power to convert themselves? That, no scripture speaks, and it were strange, if such sufficient grace were actually given to all, it should prove effectual with so very few. But the manifest effect is, that the Spirit may now go forth (the justice, and malediction of the law not reclaiming against it) and make gentle trials upon the spirits of men, inject some beams of light, and some good thoughts, with which if they comply, they have no cause to despair of more; and so, that which is wont to be called common grace, may gradually lead, and tend to that of a higher kind, which is special, and finally saving. That light, and those motions, which have only this tendency, must be ascribed to the Spirit of God, co-operating with men's natural faculties; and not to their own unassisted, natural power alone. For we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think one right thought. And now if they rebel against such light and motions, violently opposing their sensual imaginations and desires, to their light, and the secret promptings of God's Holy Spirit; they hereby vex his Spirit, provoke him to leave them, and do forfeit even those assistances they have had, and might further have expected,

upon the Redeemer's account. All which seems to be summed up, as a stated rule, in that of our Saviour—"To him that hath, shall be given; but from him that hath not" (where having manifestly includes use and improvement) "shall be taken away that which he had." Which latter words must be taken not for a prediction, expressive of the certain event, or what shall be; but a commination, expressing what is deserved, or most justly may be. The true meaning or design of a commination, being, that it may never be executed. And to the same sense is that of Prov. 1. 23, 24, &c. "Turn at my reproof—I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you: but I called, and they refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way," &c. *v. 31.*

So far then we are not without a stated rule, as to those previous and superable operations of the Spirit of God; according whereto we may expect them to be continued and increased, or fear they shall be withheld. But now, because all do more or less resist, and thereby deserve they should cease, or commit a forfeiture of them; and sometimes this forfeiture is taken, sometimes it is not; but the grieved Spirit returns, and re-enforces his holy motions, even unto victory, where, or when he shall do so, we have no certain published rule, whereby to conclude this way, or that. The Son of God (by consent with the Father) here acts as a Plenipotentiary, and Sovereign, quickening whom he will. The Spirit (by consent with him) breathes, in order to the vital production of temples, as the wind—where it listeth; or for regeneration, which is the thing there discoursed of in all that context, and even in the next following words, which apply that similitude; "so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John 3. 8. And we are therefore, elsewhere, warned to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," (Phil. 2. 12, 13.) because God worketh in us, to will, and do, of his own good pleasure; being under no tie, not quite to desist, and forsake us, at the next opposition he meets with. At least, they that are not within the compass of his covenant (once sincerely entered) can lay no claim, in such a case, to his continuance, or return.

CHAP. XI.

I. The sixth head proposed before, chap. ix. p. 416, now insisted on; which includes what was also mentioned in the first, namely, that the Holy Spirit is given, not only as the Builder, but also, *Secondly*, As an Inhabitant of this temple; for which latter purpose he is given by Immanuel as a Trustee; the *Oeconomus*, or *chief Steward*, of God's household, by a certain, known rule, giving them who partake therein, the ground of a rightful claim unto this great and most comprehensive gift. Whereupon we are to consider—The dueness and the amplitude or comprehensiveness of this gift. 1. The dueness of it. (1.) By promise. (2.) By this promise, its having the form of a covenant restipulated on their part. (3.) From their state of sonship, as regenerate: as adopted. (4.) From their being to receive it by faith. 2. Its ample extent, (1.) Measured by the covenant, considered partly in *actu signato—in agreement*, partly in *actu exercito—in execution*. This infers, [1.] Reconciliation. [2.] Relationship. (2.) The summary of the covenant refers to it. (3.) It is considered what there is promised in the gospel covenant, besides what may be comprehended in the gift of the Spirit. II. The subject resumed from chap. ix. p. 415: and having shewn, as even as there proposed, that the Spirit is not otherwise given than by Immanuel; it is considered, as was also promised, How highly reasonable it was that the Spirit should not be vouchsafed upon any other terms. III. The subject briefly considered in reference to the external state of the whole Christian church. IV. Conclusion.

I. THE sixth head proposed before, chap. ix. p. 416, now insisted on, which includes also what was mentioned in the first head, namely, that the Holy Spirit is given not only as the Builder, but also,

Secondly, As an Inhabitant of this temple. For which purpose, when by regeneration it is thus built and prepared, the Redeemer gives the Spirit upon other terms, namely, according to the tenor of a certain rule declared and published to the world: and whereby a right thereto accrues unto these regenerate ones. The unregenerate world; especially such as by frequent resistances had often forfeited all gracious communications of that blessed Spirit, have nothing to assure them he will ever regenerate them. But, being now regenerate, and thereby formed into living temples, they may, upon known and certain terms, expect him to inhabit them as such; and

to be statedly their Immanuel, and that as God, even their own God, (Ps. 67.) he will bless them, and abide with them, and in them, for that gracious purpose. Why else hath he conquered all their reluctancy, and made them his temples? It was against their (former) will, but according to his own. He at first herein, by rough hewings might displease them, but he pleased himself, and fulfilled, hereby, "the good pleasure of his own goodness," 2 Thess. 1. 11. Nor will now leave his people, because it pleased him to make them his people, 1 Sam. 12. 22. Neither is he now the less pleased that he is under bonds, for he put himself under them, most freely, and his "gifts and callings are without repentance," Rom. 11. 29. But being under bonds, he now puts on a distinct capacity, and treats these his regenerate ones under a different notion, from that under which he acted towards other men, or themselves before: not as an absolute, unobliged Sovereign; that might do, or not do for them as he would: but as a trustee, managing a trust committed to him by the Eternal Father; as the *Oeconomus*, the *great Steward* of his family; the prime Minister, and Curator of all the affairs of his house and temple, which they are, (1 Cor. 3. 17.)* all and every one: for as vast as this temple is, where it is made up of all; and as manifold as it is, when every one is to him a single temple; neither is above the comprehension, nor beneath the condescension of his large and humble mind. Neither larger diffusion, nor more particular distribution, signifying him to be greater or less, in all, in every one.

He so takes care of all, as of every one, and of every one, as if he were the only one under his care. He is the first-born among many brethren; and as that imports dignity, so it doth employment; it being his part as such to provide for the good state of the family: which is all named from him, both that part in heaven, and that on earth, Eph. 3. 15. Yea, and he may in a true sense be styled the *Paterfamiliâs, the Father of the family:* though to the *first* in Godhead, he is the *Son;* to *us* he is styled the everlasting Father,

* Hujus enim Templum simul omnes; & singuli, Templa sumus—For we altogether form this temple, and each is also a temple. Omnium Concordiam, & singulos inhabitare dignatur, non in omnibus, quam in singulis major. Quoniam nec mole distenditur, nec partitione minuitur, Aug. de Civ. Dei Lib. 10. Cap. 4.—He designs to inhabit the whole society, and every one of those who compose it; nor is He greater in the body than in the members, since he is not enlarged in the mass nor diminished by the division.

Is. 9. 6. Therefore he is under obligation hereto, by his Father's appointment, and his own undertaking.

And that which he hath obliged himself to, is to give the Holy Spirit, or take continual care that it be communicated from time to time, as particular exigencies and occasions shall require. It was a thing full of wonder, that ever he should be so far concerned in our affairs! But being concerned so deeply as we know he hath been; to be incarnate for us; to be made a sacrifice to God for us, that he might have it in his power to give the Spirit, having become a curse for us, that he might be capable of conferring upon us this blessing; it is now no wonder he should oblige himself to a continual constant care that his own great and kind design should now not be lost or miscarry. After he had engaged himself so deeply in this design for his redeemed, could he decline further obligation?

And his obligation creates their right, entitles them to this mighty gift of his own Spirit! Concerning which we shall consider—The *dueness* and the *greatness*, or amplitude of this Gift: or shew, that, as their case is now stated, upon their regeneration, they have a pleadable right to this high privilege, the continued communication of the Spirit. And next shew, of how large extent this privilege is, and how great things are contained in it. I scruple not to call it a *Gift*, and yet at the same time to assert *their right* to it, to whom it is given; not doubting but every one will see, that a right accruing by free-promise (as we shall shew this doth) detracts nothing from the freeness of the gift. When the promise only, with what we shall see is directly consequent, produces or creates this right, it is unconceivable that this creature, by resulting naturally, should injure its own parent or productive cause. We shall therefore say somewhat briefly.

1. Of the *dueness* of this continued indwelling presence of the blessed Spirit to the regenerate: (intending to speak more largely of the amplitude and extensiveness of it, on the account afterwards to be given) And

(1.) It is due (as hath been intimated) by promise It is expressly said to be the promise of the Spirit, Gal. 3. 14. But to whom? To the regenerate, to them who are born after the Spirit, as may be seen at large, *ch.* 4. These (as it after follows) are the children and heirs of the promise, which must principally mean this promise, as it is eminently called, Acts 2. 38. "Repent," (which connotes regeneration,) "and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you, &c. and to as many as the Lord shall call:" which calling, when

effectual, includes regeneration. When (Eph. 1. 13.) this blessed Spirit is called the Spirit of promise, what can that mean but the promised Spirit.

(2.) Their right is the more evident; and what is promised the more apparently due, in that the promise hath received the form of a covenant, whereby the covenanters have a more strongly pleadable right and claim; to which the rest of men have no such pretence.

It is true that we must distinguish of the covenant,—as proposed, and entered.

The *proposal* of it is in very general terms, "Ho, every one that thirsts"—Isa. 55. 1. "Incline your ear—and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—" v. 3. And so it gives a remote, future right to such as shall enter into it. But only they have a present actual right to what it contains, that have entered into it: and their plea is strong, having this to say; "I have not only an indefinite, or less determinate promise to rely upon; but a promise upon terms expressed, which I have agreed to; and there is now a mutual stipulation between God and me: He offered himself, and demanded me; I have accepted him, and given myself. And hereupon I humbly expect and claim all further needful communications of his Spirit, as the principal promised blessing of this covenant." Such a one may therefore say, as the psalmist hath taught him, Remember thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast caused me to hope, Ps. 119. 49. I had never looked for such quickening influences, if thou hadst not caused me, and been the Author to me of such an expectation. Now thou hast quickened me by thy word, v. 50. so quickening me according to thy word. "I will put my Spirit within you," is a principal article of this covenant, Ezek. 36. 27. And this expression of putting the Spirit within, must signify not a light touch upon the soul of a man, but to settle it as in the innermost centre of the soul, in order to a fixed abode.

And how sacred is the bond of this covenant! it is founded in the blood of the Mediator of it. This is, as he himself speaks, the new testament (or covenant) in my blood, Luke 22. 20. Therefore is this, in a varied phrase, said to be the "blood of the covenant:" and therefore is this covenant said to be everlasting, Heb. 13. 20. referring to a known maxim among the Hebrews, Pacts, *confirmed by blood, (sanguine sancita,)* can never be abolished. "The God of peace—by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work:" which must imply a continual communication of the Spirit;

for it is also added, to do always what is well-pleasing in his sight: which, who can do without such continual aids? "Coming to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, we come to the blood of sprinkling," Heb. 12. 24. He could not mediate for us upon other terms; and upon those, obtains for us the better promises, "spiritual blessings in heavenly things," Eph. 1. 3.

And further, this covenant is ratified by his oath who formed and made it. "My covenant will I not break—Once have I sworn," Ps. 89. 34, 35. By these two immutable things, (even to our apprehension,) it is impossible for God to lie, Heb. 6. 17, 18. Regeneration is the building of this temple; covenanting on our part contains the dedication of it; and what then can follow but constant possession and use.

(3.) The regenerate, as such, are sons, both by receiving a new nature, even a divine, 2 Pet. 1. 4. in their regeneration; and a new title, in (what is always conjunct) their adoption. Now, hereupon the continual supplies of the Spirit in this house (or temple) of his are the children's bread, Luke 11. 13. Because they are sons, therefore God sends the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, Gal. 4. 6. and he is styled the Spirit of adoption, Rom. 8. 14, 15. Therefore they have a right to the provisions of their Father's house.

(4.) The Spirit is unto these children of God given upon their faith; which must certainly suppose their previous title for the ground of it. They receive "the promise of the Spirit by faith," (Gal. 3. 14.) as by faith they are God's children, v. 26. Receiving the Son, who was eminently so, and to whom the sonship did primarily or originally belong; and believing in his name, they thereupon have ἐξουσίαν—*power* or right to become the sons of God, John 1. 12. being herein, also regenerate, born not of flesh and blood,—but of God. And thus, by faith receiving him; by faith they retain him, or have him abiding in them, as he abides in them: for the union is intimate and mutual, John 15. 5. They *first* receive him upon the gospel offer, which, as was said, gave them a remote right, and now retain him, as having an actual right. He dwells in the heart by faith, Eph. 3. 17. But what he doth, in this respect, his Spirit doth: so he explains himself: for when, in those valedictory chapters of St. John's gospel, 14, 15, 16. he promises his disconsolate disciples, he would come to them, he would see them, he would manifest himself to them, he would abide with them, within a little while they should see him, &c. he intimates to them, that he principally meant all

this of a presence to be vouchsafed them by his Spirit, *ch.* 14. *v.* 16—19. And he concerns the Father also with himself in the same sort of commerce; (*v.* 20.) "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you;" as also *v.* 21, and 23. Thus in another place, we find the Spirit promiscuously spoken of as the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ; and the inbeing, or indwelling of Christ, and of the Spirit, used as expressions signifying the same thing; when also the operation of God is spoken of by the same indwelling Spirit, Rom. 8. 9—11. Which an eminent father observing, takes occasion to speak of the joint presence of the several persons of the trinity, with such, with whom any one is present, because each bears itself inseparably towards the other, and is united most intimately therewith,* *wheresoever one hypostasis* (or person, as by the Latins we are taught to speak) *is present there, the whole trinity is present*—Amazing thing! that the glorious Subsistents in the eternal Godhead, should so concentre in kind design, influence and operation towards a despicable impure worm!

But this conjunction infers no confusion; breaks not the order, wherein each severally acts towards one end. But that, notwithstanding, we may conceive from whom, through whom, and by whom, what was lately a ruinous heap is become an animated temple, inhabited by the divine presence, wherein we ought not to forget, how eminent and conspicuous the part is of our Lord Christ, and upon how costly terms he obtained, that the blessed Spirit should so statedly, and upon a right claimable by faith, employ his mighty agency in this most gracious and wonderful undertaking! being (as hath been observed) made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith, Gal. 3. 13, 14. Whence also it is said that after our believing we are sealed with the Spirit of promise; (Eph. 1. 13.) that is, by that seal, by which God knows, or owns, or acknowledges, them that are his, (2 Tim. 2. 19.) though they may not always know it themselves. Hereupon also our Lord hath assured us: from them that believe in him, shall flow (as out of the belly of a conduit) rivers of living waters, which it is said he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believed should receive, John 7. 38, 39.

Much more might be alleged from many texts of the old and new testament to evince the right which believers, or they who

* Ὅπου γὰρ ἡ μία τῆς τριάδος ὑπόστασις παρῇ πᾶσα πάρεστιν ἡ τριας. Chrys. in Epist. ad Roman.

are God's more peculiar people, have to the abiding indwelling presence of his Spirit, as the inhabitant of that temple which they are now become. But that matter being plain, we shall proceed to what was next proposed; to shew:

2. The ample extent and comprehensiveness of this privilege, which I shall the rather enlarge upon, that from thence we may have the clearer ground upon which afterwards to argue;—how highly reasonable and congruous it was, that so great a thing, and of so manifest importance to God's having a temple and residence among men should not be otherwise communicated than in and by Immanuel; the Founder and Restorer of this temple.

(1.) And we cannot have a truer, or surer measure, of the amplitude and extensiveness of this gift, than the extent and comprehensiveness of the covenant itself, to which it belongs. To which purpose, let it be considered that this covenant of God in Christ, of which we are now speaking, may be looked upon two ways; that is,

We may view it abstractly, taking the frame and model of it, as is were *in actu signato—in agreement*, to be collected and gathered out of the holy Scriptures. Or we way look upon it as *in actu exercito*, namely, as it is *now transacted* and entered into by the blessed God, and this or that awakened, considering, predisposed soul. Now here,

Take it the *former way*, and you find this article, concerning the gift or communication of the Holy Ghost; standing there as one great grant contained in the gospel covenant. And it is obvious to observe, as it is placed there, what aspect it hath upon both the parts of the covenant, I will be your God—you shall be my People. Which will be seen, if

You consider this covenant as *actually entered into*, or as the covenanting parties are treating; the one, to draw the other to enter this covenant. And so we shall see that our consent, both that God shall be our God, and that we will be of his people, with all previous inclinations thereto, and what immediately results from our covenanting, do all depend upon this communication of the Spirit; and otherwise, neither can he do the part of a God to us, nor we, the part that belongs to his people towards him. By all which we shall see the vast extent of the gift. It is the Mediator's part to bring the covenanting parties together. He is therefore said to be the Mediator of the new covenant, Heb. 12. 24. He rendered it possible, by the merit of his blood, that the offended Majesty of heaven might, without injury to himself, consent; and that

the Spirit might be given to procure our consent, which, as Mediator or Immanuel, he gives: and when he gives it in so copious an effusion, as to be victorious, to conquer our aversion, and make us cease to be rebellious, then he enters to dwell, Ps. 68. 18. Till then, there is no actual covenanting; no plenary consent on our part to what is proposed in the covenant, in either respect: we neither agree that God shall be our God, nor that we will be of his people. This speaks this gift a great thing and of vast extent, looking for the present upon the two parts of the covenant summarily: and afterwards considering what each part more particularly contains in it. But if in practice, it be so far done as is requisite to a judicious and preponderating determination of will, (which may yet afterwards admit of higher degrees,) how great a thing is now done! Their state is distinguished from theirs who are strangers to the covenant, who are without Christ, and without God in the world. From hence results,

[1.] An express reconciliation between God and thee: for this is a league of friendship, enmity ceasing.

[2.] A fixed special relation; (Ezek. 16. 8.) "I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." How great and high a privilege! Relations are said to be of minute entity, but great efficacy: and it is observable what the philosopher (as he was wont to be called) says of them, (Ar. τα πρός τι.) that their *whole being*, namely, of the things related, is related to another. Admirable! *all the divine Being* related to me a worm! And that all this may be the plainer, let us,

(2.) But consider more distinctly what the great *summary* of God's part of this covenant contains; what is the most principal promise of it; the dependance of our part thereon; upon what terms that which is distinct is promised; how far what is distinctly promised, is coincident with this gift of the indwelling Spirit, both in respect of this present and the future eternal state.

[1.] The known and usual summary of this covenant, on God's part, is, "I will be their God;" as it is set down in many places of both testaments. Now, what can be meant, more principally, by his being their God, than giving them his indwelling Spirit? Wherein without it can he do the part of a God to them? By it he both governs and satisfies them: is both their supreme and sovereign Lord, in the one regard, and their supreme and sovereign good, in the other. Doth being their God intend no more than an empty title? or, what

would be their so great advantage, in having only a nominal God? Yea, and he is pleased himself to expound it of his continued gracious presence, (2 Cor. 6. 16.) "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God;" alluding to his continuing his tabernacle among them, as is promised, Lev. 26. 11, 12. "I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you; and I will walk among you, and I will be your God," &c. And what did that tabernacle signify but this *living temple*, whereof we speak, as a certain type and shadow of it? Agreeably whereto his covenant is expressed, with evident reference to the days of the gospel, and the time of the Messiah's kingdom, (plainly meant by David's being their king and prince for ever,) Ezek. 37. 24—27. "David, my servant, shall be king over them," (spoken many an age after he was dead and gone,)—"and their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God." That *Yea*, the exegetical note, is observable, "my sanctuary and tabernacle shall be with them," (that is, "I will dwell in them," as it is expounded before, 2 Cor. 6. 16. And could it be meant of an uninhabited, desolate sanctuary or tabernacle, that should be with them for evermore?) And why is this his constant inhabiting presence to be with them? The emphatical *yea*, with what follows, informs us, Yea, I will be their God: as if he should say, I have undertaken to be their God, which I cannot make good unto them, if I afford them not my indwelling presence. To be to them a distant God, a God afar off, can neither answer my covenant, nor the exigency of their case. They will but have a God, and no God, if they have not with them, and in them, a divine, vital, inspiriting, inactuating presence, to govern, quicken, support, and satisfy them, and fill them with an all-sufficient fulness. They would soon, otherwise, be an habitation for Ziim and Ochim, or be the temple but of idol gods.

It is therfore evident that this summary of God's part of his covenant, I will be their God, very principally intends his dwelling in them by his Spirit.

And the restipulation, on their part, to be his people, (which is generally added in all the places, wherein the other part is expressed,) signifies their faith, by which they take hold of his covenant, accept him to be their God, dedicate themselves to be his people, his peculiar, his mansion, his

temple, wherein he may dwell. Now this their self-resigning faith, taken in its just latitude, carries with it a twofold reference to Him, as their Sovereign Lord, as their Sovereign Good; whom, above all other, they are to obey and enjoy. But can they obey him, if he do not put his Spirit into them, to write his law in their hearts, and "cause them to walk in his statutes?" Ezek. 36. 27. Jer. 31. 33. Or can they enjoy him, if they love him not as their best good? which love is the known fruit of his Spirit. Whereupon, after such self-resignation and dedication, what remains, but that "the house of the Lord be filled with the glory of the Lord?" as 2 Chr. 7. 2.

[2.] Let us consider what is the express, more peculiar kind of the promises of this covenant, in the Christian contradistinct to the Mosaical administration of it. It is evident, in the general, that the promises of the gospel covenant are in their nature and kind, compared with those that belonged to the Mosaical dispensation, more spiritual; therefore called better promises, Heb. 8. 6. They are not promises of secular felicity, of external prosperity, peace, and plenty, as those other most expressly were. It is true indeed that the covenant with Israel, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, was not exclusive of spiritual good things. For the communication of the Spirit was (as hath been noted) the blessing of Abraham, (Gal. 3. 14.) and that, as he was the father of that people, the head of a community, now to be much more extended, and take in the Gentiles, the time being come, when all nations were to be blessed in him, which is said to be the gospel that was preached to Abraham, Gal. 3. 8. But in the mean time, the Spirit was given less generally, and in a much lower measure; wherefore, in that purposed comparison, 2 Cor. 3. between the legal and the evangelical dispensation; though a certain glory did attend the former, yet that glory is said to be no glory, in respect of the so much excelling glory of this latter, v. 10. And the thing wherein it so highly excelled, was the much more copious effusion of the Spirit. That whereas, under the former dispensation, Moses was read for many ages, with little efficacy, a vail being upon the people's hearts, signified by the (mystical) vail wherewith, when he conversed with them, he was wont to cover his face; that comparative inefficacy proceeding from hence, that little of the light, life, and power of the Spirit accompanied that dispensation: now, under the gospel dispensation, the glory of the Lord was to be beheld as in a glass, with unvailed face, so as that, beholding

it, we might be changed (so great an efficacy and power went with it) into the same likeness, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord; which is the scope of the latter part of that chapter, from *v.* 10 to 18.* How great were the splendour and magnificence of Solomon's temple, yet how much more glorious is that which is built of living stones! And as the whole frame of that former economy was always less spiritual, a lower measure of the Spirit always accompanying it; so when it stood in competition, as corrival to the Christian dispensation, being hereupon quite deserted by the Spirit, it is spoken of as weak, worldly, carnal, and beggarly, Gal. 4. 9. Col. 2. 20. Heb. 9. 2, 10. Therefore the apostle expostulates with the Galatian Christians, verging towards Judaism; "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. 3. 2, 3. and *ch.* 4. from *v.* 22 to 31. Speaking of the two covenants, under allegorical representation, he makes the former, given upon Mount Sinai, to be signified by Agar the bond-woman, and by the terrestrial Jerusalem, which was then in bondage, with her children, as productive but of a servile race, born after the flesh only, as Ishmael was, destitute of the Divine Spirit; (which where it is, there is liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17.) the other by Sarah, a free-woman, and by the celestial Jerusalem, which is free, with her children, all born from above, of the Divine Spirit; (John 3. 3, 5. as ἄνωθεν there signifies;) which spiritual seed, signified by Isaac, are said at once to be born after the Spirit, and by promise, *v.* 23, 28, 29. And this can import no less than, that the ancient promise, (given long before the law, upon Mount Sinai, namely, four hundred and thirty years, Gal. 3. 17. and expressly called the covenant of God, in Christ; most eminently to be made good in the days of the gospel, after the cessation of the Mosaical institution, as it was made before it,) must principally mean the promise of the Spirit. Which is most plain from that of the apostle Peter to his convinced, heart-wounded hearers, Acts 2. 38, 39: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the *promise* is unto you, and

* Domus Dei ædificatur per Testamentum Novum lapidibus vivis longe gloriosior quam Templum illud quod à Rege Solomone constructum est, &c.—The house of God is built by the New Testament with living stones, and is far more glorious than the temple which was erected by king Solomon. Aug. de Civ. Dei. L. 18. C. 45.

your children, and to all that are afar off," (this promise not being to be confined to them and their children, but to reach the Gentiles also, as Gal. 3. 14.) "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And surely that which is, by way of excellency, called *the promise*, must be the more principal promise of this covenant; which it is also signified to be, in that account given of it by the prophets, Isa. 44. 3. and 59. 20, 21. Jer. 31. 33. quoted Heb. 8. 10. (where though the Spirit be not expressly named, yet those effects of it are, which manifestly suppose it,) and Ezek. 36. 25, 27. Joel 2. 28. This new covenant is distinguished from the former, by the more certain, more general, and more efficacious communication of the Spirit promised in it, as is plainly implied, Jer. 31. and (which refers thereto) Heb. 8. 9—11.

[3.] It will further tend to evidence, that the Spirit is given as a settled Inhabitant, upon the known terms of this covenant; if we consider upon what terms it is promised, what is distinctly but however most conjunctly promised therewith, namely, all the relative graces of justification, pardon of sin, and adoption. These are promised, as is apparent, in the same covenant, and upon faith, which is our taking hold of and entering into the covenant, our accepting God in Christ to be our God, and giving up ourselves to be his people; and is (according to that latitude, wherein faith is commonly taken) inclusive of repentance. For a sinner, one before in a state of apostasy from God, cannot take him to be his God, but in so doing he must exercise repentance towards God. His very act of taking him, in Christ, is turning to him through Christ, from the sin by which he had departed and apostatized from him before. Therefore must the indwelling Spirit be given, upon the same certain and known terms as is also expressed in (the beforementioned) Gal. 3. 14. Eph. 1. 13, &c. Acts 2. 38, 39.

[4.] Now faith and repentance being first given in forming God's temple, consider, how coincident the gift of the Spirit, as an Inhabitant, is with remission of sin, or with whatsoever relative grace as such, is distinct from that which is inherent, subjected in the soul itself, and really transmutative of its subject. But we are to consider withal, how manifestly the latter of these is involved in the former. Giving the Spirit (the root and original of subjective grace) implies two things: first, conferring a right to it: and secondly, actual communication. The former belongs to relative grace, the latter to real; (as they commonly distinguish;) but the former is in order to the latter, and the latter most certainly follows upon

the former. Both are signified by one name of *giving;* and do both, in a sort, make one entire legal act, (though there are distinct physical ones,) which the former (usually) begins, and the latter consummates. Divers things are not herein given, but only a title to, and the possession of the same thing: nor by divers donations; but by the concurrence of such things as are requisite to make up one and the same. And let it now be considered,

(3.) What there is promised in the gospel-covenant, besides what may be comprehended in the gift of the Spirit. We will first set aside what is manifestly not promised in it besides; and then, more closely inquire about what may seem distinctly promised, and see in how great part that residue will be reducible hither.

[1.] As to what is manifestly not promised besides; it is plain, there is not promised in it a part and portion in a particular land or country on earth, as there was in the old covenant (contra-distinguished to this new one) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, which land was, we know, called the "land of promise;" and unto which the body of that people had so certain a title, upon the condition of their continued obedience, that they were sure never to be removed out of it; or if they had made a general defection, and were thereupon forsaken of God, and given up to invading enemies, that should dispossess them, they were as sure, upon their general repentance, to be restored, and settled there again, as may be seen in Solomon's prayer, at the dedication of the temple, and God's most gracious and particular answer thereto, and in divers places of the Old Testament besides.

If particular persons brake this covenant, by grosser transgressions, they were to be cut off from this good land, and, by Moses's law, at the mouth of two or three witnesses, to die without mercy; and so, by such execution of justice, the body of the people was kept safe from divine displeasure; the land was not defiled, so as to spew out its inhabitants.

But if the people did generally revolt, so as that the ordinary methods of punitive justice could have no place, God took the matter into his own hands, and did justice upon them himself, by casting them out. This is the covenant which, it is said, they brake, Jer. 31. 32. and Heb. 8. The new gospel covenant is apparently of no such import, or hath no such additament to the spiritual blessings of it.

Nor again doth it promise more indefinitely, temporal blessings of any kind, with certainty, upon any condition whatso-

ever, even of the highest faith, the most fervent love to God, or the most accurate obedience, and irreprehensible sanctity, attainable on earth; as if the best and holiest men should therefore be any whit the more assured of constant health, ease, opulency, or peace in this world. We know the ordinary course of providence (which cannot justly be understood to be a misinterpreter of God's covenant) runs much otherwise; and that such things as concern the good estate of our spirits, and inward man, are the only things we can, upon any terms, be sure of, by this covenant; the tenor of it not warranting us to look upon external good things, as otherwise promised, than so far as they may be subservient to these, and to our better serving the interest and honour of God and the Redeemer; of which things he reserves the judgment to himself; And unto Him, by this covenant, we absolutely devote ourselves to serve and glorify him in his own way, and in whatsoever external circumstances his wisdom and good pleasure shall order for us; being ourselves only assured of this in the general, That all things shall work together for good to us, if we love him, &c. but still esteeming it our highest good (as we cannot but do, if we love him as we ought) to be most serviceable to his glory, and conformable, in our habitual temper, to his will. Spiritual good things then, are by the tenor of this covenant our only certainties. Other things indeed cannot be the matter of absolute universal promise. Their nature refuses it and makes them uncapable. They are but of a mutable goodness; may be sometimes, in reference to our great end, good for us; and sometimes, or in some circumstances, evil and prejudicial. And being in a possibility to become evil in that relative sense, (as what hinders a greater good, is then an evil,) if they ever be actually so; they are then no longer matter of a promise. The promise would in that case cease to be a promise; for can there be a promise of an evil? It would then necessarily degenerate, and turn into a threatening.

But it may be said of those good things that are of a higher kind and nature, that respect our souls and our states godward, there seem to be some vastly different from this of giving the Spirit. Therefore,

[2.] We are next to inquire what they are, and how far they may be found to fall into this.

Remission of sin is most obvious, and comes first in view, upon this account. And let us bethink ourselves what it is. We will take it for granted, that it is not a mere concealed will or purpose to pardon, on the one hand, (for no one in com-

mon speech takes it so; a purpose to do a thing signifies it not yet to be done;) nor mere not punishing, on the other. If one should be never so long only forborne, and not punished, he may yet be still punishable, and will be always so, if he be yet guilty. It is therefore such an act as doth, in law, take away guilt, namely, the *reatum pœnæ*, or dissolve the *obligation to suffer punishment.*

It is therefore to be considered, what punishment a sinner was, by the violated law of works and nature, liable to in this world, or in the world to come; and then what of this, is, by virtue of the Redeemer's sacrifice and covenant, remitted. He was liable to whatsoever miseries in this life God should please to inflict; to temporal death, and to a state of misery hereafter, all comprehended in this threatening, "Thou shalt die the death;" if we will take following scriptures and providences for a commentary upon it.

Now the miseries to which the sinner was liable in this world, were either external, or internal. Those of the former sort, the best men still remain liable to. Those of the inner man were certainly the greater, both in themselves, and in their tendency and consequence; especially such as stand in the ill dispositions of men's minds and spirits godward, unapprehensiveness of him, alienation from him, willingness to be as without him in the world. For that the spirits of men should be thus disaffected, and in this averse posture towards God, in whom only it could be possible for them to be happy, how could it but be most pernicious to them, and virtually comprehensive of the worst miseries? And whence came these evils to fall into the reasonable, intelligent mind and spirit of man? Was it by God's infusion? Abhorred be that black thought! Nor could it be, if they were not forsaken of God, and the holy light and influence of his Spirit were not withheld. But is more evil inflicted upon men than either the threatening or the sentence of the law contained? That were to say, he is punished above legal desert, and beyond what it duly belonged to him to suffer. Experience shews this to be the common case of men. And did that threatening and sentence concern Adam only, and not his posterity? How then come they to be mortal, and otherwise externally miserable in this world, as well as he? But how plainly is the matter put out of doubt, that the suspension of the Spirit is part (and it cannot but be the most eminent part) of the curse of the law, by that of the apostle, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that this blessing—might come upon

us," (even the Gentiles, as well as Abraham's seed,) "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit," Gal. 3. 13, 14.

But now what is there of all the misery duly incumbent upon man in this world, by the constitution of that law of works and nature, remitted and taken off by virtue of the covenant or law of grace or faith, from them that have taken hold of it, or entered into it? Who dare say, God doth not keep covenant with them? And we find they die as well as other men; and are as much subject to the many inconveniences and grievances of human life. And it is not worth the while to talk of the mere notion, under which they suffer them. It is evident that God doth them no wrong, in letting these be their lot; and therefore that as they were, by the law of nature deserved; so God hath not obliged himself, by the covenant or law of grace, to take or keep them off; for then surely he had kept his word. That he hath obliged himself to do that which is more, and a greater thing, to bless and sanctify them to their advantage and gain, in higher respects, is plain and out of question. Which serves our present purpose and crosses it not.

For upon the whole, that which remains the actual matter of remission, in this world, is whatsoever of those spiritual evils would be necessarily consequent upon the total restraint, and withholding of the Spirit.

And that this is the remission of sin in this life, which the Scripture intends, is plain from divers express places, Acts 2. 37, 38. When the apostle Peter's heart-pierced hearers cry out, in their distress, "What shall we do?" he directs them thus: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall (he adds) receive the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you, and your children;" as though he had said, "The great promise of the gospel-covenant, is that of the gift of the Holy Ghost. It doth not promise you worldly wealth or ease or riches or honours; but it promises you that God will be no longer a stranger to you, refuse your converse, withhold his Spirit from you; your souls shall lie no longer waste and desolate. But as he hath mercifully approached your spirits, to make them habitable, and fit to receive so great and so holy an intimate, and to your reception whereof, nothing but unremitted sin could be any obstruction; as, upon your closing with the terms of the gospel-covenant, by a sincere believing intuition towards him whom you have pierced, and resolving to become Christians, whereof your being baptized, and therein taking on Christ's badge

and cognizance, will be the fit and enjoined sign and token, and by which federal rite, remission of sin shall be openly confirmed, and solemnly sealed unto you; so by that remission of sin the bar is removed, and nothing can hinder the Holy Ghost from entering to take possession of your souls as his own temple and dwelling-place."

We are by the way to take notice, that this fulfilling of the terms of the gospel-covenant is aptly enough, in great part, here expressed by the word *repentance;* most commonly it is by that of *faith*. It might as fitly be signified by the former in this place, if you consider the tenor of the foregoing discourse, namely, that it remonstrated to them their great wickedness in crucifying Christ as a malefactor and impostor, whom they ought to have believed in as a Saviour; now to repent of this, was *to believe*, which yet is more fully expressed by that which follows, and be baptized in (or rather into) the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is in the whole plain, that their reception of the Holy Ghost, as a Dweller, stands in close connexion, as an immediate consequent, with their having their sins actually remitted, and that, with their repenting their former refusing of Christ, as the Messiah, their now becoming Christians, or taking on Christ's name, whereof their being baptized was to be only the sign, and the solemnization of their entrance into the Christian state, and by consequence, a visible confirmation of remission of sin to them. They are therefore directed to be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι, or unto a covenant-surrender of themselves to Christ, whereof their baptism was, it is true, to be the signifying token for the remission of sins, which remission, therefore, must be understood, connected, not with the sign but with the thing which it signified. And it was only a more explicit repentance of their former infidelity, and a more explicit faith, which the apostle now exhorts them to, the inchoation whereof he might already perceive, by their concerned question, "What shall we do?" intimating their willingness to do any thing that they ought; that their hearts were already overcome and won; and that the Holy Ghost had consequently began to enter upon them: the manifestation of whose entrance is elsewhere, as to persons adult, found to be an antecedent requisite to baptism, and made the argument why it should not be withheld, as Acts 10. 47. "Can any man forbid that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"

Remission of sin therefore, as it signifies giving a right to future impunity, signifies giving a right to the participation of the Spirit; the withholding whereof was the principal punishment to be taken off. And as it signifies the actual taking off of that punishment, it must connote the actual communication of the Spirit. Therefore, upon that faith which is our entrance into the gospel-covenant, the curse which withheld the Spirit is removed, and so we receive the promise of the Spirit (or the promised Spirit) by faith, as is plain in that before mentioned, Gal. 3. 13, 14.

The same reference of giving (or continuing) the Spirit unto forgiveness of sin, we may observe in that of the Psalmist: "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right Spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" (Psa. 51. 9—11.) which it is plain was dreaded and deprecated as the worst of evils; but which would be kept off, if iniquity were blotted out. And as to this, there was no more difference in the case, than between one whose state was to be renewed, and one with whom God was first to begin. And that summary of spiritual blessings promised in the new covenant, Jer. 31. 31, 32, &c. and Heb. 8. which all suppose the promised gift of the Spirit itself, as the root of them all—"I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts," &c. is all grounded upon this: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." When therefore the punishment of sin is remitted, *quoad jus*, or a right is granted to impunity, the Spirit is, *de jure*, given; or a right is conferred unto this sacred gift. When actually (upon that right granted) the punishment is taken off, the Spirit is actually given; the withholding whereof was the principal punishment we were liable to, in this present state.

And as to *justification*, the case cannot differ, which itself so little differs from pardon, that the same act is pardon, being done by God as a sovereign Ruler acting above law, namely, the law of works; and justification, being done by him as sustaining the person of a judge according to law, namely, the law of grace.

Adoption also imports the privilege conferred of being the sons of God. And what is that privilege? (for it is more than a name) that such are led by the Spirit of God; (Rom. 8. 14.) which Spirit is therefore, as the peculiar cognizance of their

state, called the Spirit of adoption, (v. 15.) and forms their's suitably thereto: for it was not fit the sons of God should have the spirits of slaves. It is not the spirit of bondage that is given them, as there it is expressed, but a free generous spirit; not of fear, as there, and 2 Tim. 1. 7. but of love and power, and of a sound mind. Most express is that parallel text, Gal. 4. 6. Because they are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, that enables them (as also Rom. 8. 16. speaks) to say, Abba, Father, makes them understand their state, whose sons they are, and who is their Father, and really implants in them all filial dispositions and affections.

Wherefore it is most evident that the relative grace of the covenant only gives a right to the real grace of it; and that the real grace communicated in this life, is all comprehended in the gift of the Spirit, even that which flows in the external dispensations of Providence, not excepted. For as outward good things, or immunity from outward afflictions, are not promised in this new covenant, further than as they shall be truly and spiritually good for us; but we are, by the tenor of it, left to the suffering of very sharp afflictions, and the loss or want of all worldly comforts, with assurance, that will turn to our greater spiritual advantage; so the grace and sanctifying influence, that shall make them do so, is all from the same Fountain, the issue of the same blessed Spirit. We only add, that eternal life in the close of all depends upon it, not only as the many things already mentioned, do so, that are necessary to it, but as it is signified to be itself the immediate perpetual spring thereof. They that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, Gal. 6. 8. And how plainly hath our blessed Lord signified the vast extent of this gift, when by good things in general, Mat. 7. 11. he lets us know he means the Holy Spirit, Luke 11. 13.

We therefore see, that this great gift of the Holy Ghost is vouchsafed entirely upon the Redeemer's account, and by the authority of his office, for the *building* and *inhabiting* the desolated temple of God with men. For the *rebuilding* of it; by that plenipotency, or absolute fulness of power, which, by the sacrifice of himself, he hath obtained should be in him. For the *re-inhabiting* of it, by virtue, and according to the tenor of that covenant, now solemnly entered; and which was established and ratified in the blood of that same Sacrifice. Herein appears the dueness of it to the regenerate; or that they have a real right to it, who are born of the Spirit; and

we have also seen the large amplitude and vast comprehensiveness of this gift.

II. We therefore proceed to what was, in the next place, promised, chap. ix. p. 415, (and wherein, after what hath been said, there will need little enlargement,) to shew,

(2.) How highly reasonable it was the Holy Spirit of God should not be vouchsafed for these purposes, upon other terms. And this we shall see,

[1.] By mentioning briefly, what we have been shewing all this while,—The *vast extent* and *amplitude* of this gift. Let it be remembered that the most considerable part of the penalty and curse incurred by the apostasy, was the withholding of the Spirit; from which curse in the whole of it Christ was to redeem us, by being made a curse for us. By the same curse also, our title to many other benefits ceased and was lost, and many other miseries were inferred upon it. But this *one* of being *deprived of the Spirit* did so far surmount all the rest, that nothing else was thought worth the naming with it, when the curse of the law, and Christ's redemption of us from it, are so designedly spoken of together. If only lesser penalties were to have been remitted, or favours conferred of an inferior kind, a recompense to the violated law and justice of God, and the affronted majesty of his government, had been less necessarily insisted on. But that the greatest thing imaginable should be vouchsafed upon so easy terms; and without a testified resentment of the injury done by ruining his former temple, was never to be expected. Nothing was more becoming or worthy of God, than when man's revolt from him so manifestly implied an insolent conceit of his self-sufficiency, and that he could subsist and be happy alone, he should presently withhold his Spirit, and leave him to sink into that carnality which involved the fulness of death and misery in it. ("To be carnally minded is death.") It belonged to the majesty and grandeur of the Deity, it was a part of godlike state and greatness, to retire and become reserved, to reclude himself, and shut up his holy cheering influences and communications from a haughty miscreant; that it might try and feel what a sort of God it could be to itself: but to return; the state of the case being unaltered and every way the same as when he withdrew, no reparation being made, no atonement offered, had been, instead of judging his offending creature, to have judged himself, to rescind his own sentence as if it had been unjust; to tear his act and deed as if it had been the product of a rash

and hasty passion, not of mature and wise counsel and judgment; the indecency and unbecomingness whereof had been the greater and the more conspicuous, by how much the greater and more peculiar favour it was to restore his gracious presence, or (which is all one) the influences of his Holy Spirit. Further consider,

[2.] That since nothing was more necessary for the restitution of God's temple, it had been strange if, in the constitution of Immanuel for this purpose, this had been omitted: for it is plain that without it things could never have come to any better state and posture between God and man; God must have let him be at the same distance, without giving him his Spirit. Neither could He honourably converse with man; nor man possibly converse with Him. Man would ever have borne towards God an implacable heart. And whereas it is acknowledged, on all hands, his *repentance* at least was necessary both on God's account and his own, that God might be reconciled to him, who without intolerable diminution to himself, could never otherwise have shewn him favour. He had always carried about him the καρδίαν ἀμεταμέλητον, *the heart that could not repent.* The "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God, is neither subject to him nor can be," had remained in full power; there had never been any stooping or yielding on man's part. And there had remained, besides, all manner of impurities: fleshly lusts had retained the throne; the soul of man had continued a cage of every noisome and hateful thing, the most unfit in all the world, to have been the temple of the holy blessed God. It had neither stood with his majesty to have favoured an impenitent, nor with his holiness to have favoured so impure a creature. Therefore, without the giving of his Spirit to mollify and purify the spirits of men, his honour in such a reconciliation had never been salved.

And take the case as it must stand on man's part, his happiness had remained impossible. He could never have conversed with God, or taken complacency in him, to whom he had continued everlastingly unsuitable and disaffected. No valuable end could have been attained, that it was either fit God should have designed for himself, or was necessary to have been effected for man. In short, there could have been no temple: God could never have dwelt with man; man would never have received him to dwell.

[3.] But it is evident this was not omitted in the constitution of Immanuel. It being provided and procured by his

dear expense, that he should have in him a fulness of Spirit: not merely as God; for so in reference to offending creatures it had been inclosed: but as Immanuel, as a Mediator, a dying Redeemer; for only by such a one, or by him as such, it could be communicated; so was there a sufficiency for this purpose of restoring God's temple. And why was he in this way to become sufficient, if afterwards he might have been waved, neglected, and the same work have been done another way?

[4.] It could only be done this way, in and by Immanuel. As such, he had both the natural and moral power in conjunction, which were necessary to effect it.

The *natural power* of Deity which was in him, was only competent for this purpose. Herein had he the advantage infinitely of all human power and greatness. If an offended secular prince had never so great a mind to save and restore a condemned favourite, who besides that he is of so haughty a pride, and so hardened in his enmity, that he had rather die than supplicate, hath contracted all other vicious inclinations, is become infamously immoral, debauched, unjust, dishonest, false, and we will suppose stupid, and bereft of the sprightly wit that graced his former conversation; his merciful prince would fain preserve and enjoy him as before; but he cannot change his qualities, and cannot but be ashamed to converse familiarly with him, while they remain unchanged. Now the blessed Immanuel, as he is God, can, by giving his Spirit, do all his pleasure in such a case. And he hath as such too,

The *moral power* of doing it most righteously and becomingly of God, that is, upon consideration of that great and noble sacrifice, which as such he offered up. He is now enabled to give the Spirit: he might otherwise do any thing for man, rather than this: for it imports the greatest intimacy imaginable. All external overtures and expressions of kindness, were nothing in comparison of it. And no previous disposition towards it, nothing of compliance on the sinner's part, no self-purifying, no self-loathing for former impurities, no smiting on the thigh, or saying, "What have I done," could be supposed antecedent to this communication of the Spirit! The universe can afford no like case, between an offending wretch, and an affronted ruler. If the greatest prince on earth had been never so contumeliously abused by the most abject peasant; the distances are infinitely less, than between the injured glorious Majesty of heaven, and the guilty sinner; the injury done this majesty incomprehensibly greater.

And besides all other differences in the two cases, there is this most important one, as may be collected from what hath been so largely discoursed, that the principal thing in the sentence and curse upon apostate man, was, That God's Spirit should retire and be withheld, so that he should converse with him, by it, no more. The condemning sentence upon a criminal, doth in secular governments extend to life and estate; such a one might be pardoned as to both, and held ever at a distance. If before he were a favourite, he may still remain discourted. Familiar converse with his prince, was ever a thing to which he could lay no legal claim, but was always a thing of free and arbitrary favour. But suppose, in this case of delinquency, the law and his sentence did forbid it for ever; and suppose we that vile insolent peasant, before under obligation to his prince, for his daily livelihood and subsistence, now under condemnation for most opprobrious affronts and malicious attempts against him; he relents not, scorns mercy, defies justice; his compassionate prince rushes, notwithstanding, into his embraces, takes him into his cabinet, shuts himself up with him in secret: but all this while, though by what he does he debases himself, beyond all expectation or decency; the principal thing is still wanting, he cannot alter his disposition. If he could give him a truly right mind, it were better than all the riches of the Indies. This greatest instance of condescension, he cannot reach, if he never so gladly would. It is not in his power, even when he joins bosoms, to mingle spirits with him; and so must leave him as uncapable of his most valuable end, as he found him.

In the present case; what was in itself so necessary to the intended end, was only possible to Immanuel; who herein becomes most intimate to us, and in the fullest sense admits to be so called; and was therefore, necessary to be done by him: unless his so rich sufficiency, and his end itself, should be lost together.

Thus far we have been considering the temple of God individually taken as each man, once become sincerely good and pious, renewed, united with Immanuel, that is, with God in Christ, and animated by his Spirit, may be himself a single temple to the most high God.

III. I might now pass on to treat of the external state of the Christian church, and of the whole community of Christians, who collectively taken, and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief

Corner-stone, in whom fitly framed and builded together, they grow unto an holy temple in the Lord; and are in this compacted state, a habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2. 20. But this larger subject, the outer-court of this temple, is, I find, beset and overspread with scratching briers and thorns. And for the sacred structure itself, though other foundation none can lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3. 11; &c. yet some are for superstructing one thing, some another; some gold, silver, precious stones; others wood, hay, stubble. I am, for my part, content, that every man's work be made manifest, when the day shall declare it.

Great differences there have long been, and still are, about setting up (the πτερύγια) the pinnacles, and adjoining certain appendicles, which some have thought may innocently and becomingly belong to it. And very different sentiments there have been about modifying the services of it. Some too are for garnishing and adorning it one way, some another. And too many agitate these little differences, with so contentious heats and angers, as to evaporate the inward spirit and life, and hazard the consumption of the holy fabric itself. Ill-willers look on with pleasure, and do hope the violent convulsions which they behold, will tear the whole frame in pieces, and say in their hearts, "Down with it even to the ground." But it is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell can never prevail!

It ought not to be doubted, but that there will yet be a time, of so copious an effusion of the Holy Spirit, as will invigorate it afresh, and make it spring up out of its macilent, withered state, into its primitive liveliness and beauty; when it shall, according to the intended spiritual meaning, resemble the external splendor of its ancient figure; Sion, the perfection of beauty; and arise and shine, the glory of the Lord being risen upon it. But if before that time there be a day that shall burn as an oven, and make the hemisphere as one fiery vault; a day wherein the jealous God shall plead against the Christian church for its lukewarmness and scandalous coldness in the matter of serious substantial religion; and no less scandalous heats and fervours about trivial formalities, with just indignation, and flames of consuming fire, then will the straw and stubble be burnt up; and such as were sincere, though too intent upon such little trifles, be saved yet so as through fire.

A twofold effusion we may expect, of the *wrath*, and of the *Spirit* of God. The former to vindicate himself; the other to reform us. Then will this temple no more be termed for-

saken; it will be actually and in fact, what in right it is always, "Bethel, The house of God, and the gate of heaven." Until then, little prosperity is to be hoped for in the Christian church; *spiritual*, without a large communication of the Spirit, it cannot *have; external* (without it) it cannot *bear*. It was a noted Pagan's observation and experiment, *Infirmi est animi, non posse pati divitias—how incapable a weak mind is of a prosperous state.* Sen. In heaven there will be no need of afflictions: on earth, the distempers of men's minds do both need and cause them. The pride, avarice, envyings, self-conceitedness, abounding each in their own sense, minding every one their own things, without regard to those of another, a haughty confidence of being always in the right, with contempt and hard censures of them that differ, spurning at the royal law of doing as one would be done to; of bearing with others, as one would be borne with, evil surmisings; the imperiousness of some, and peevishness of others, to be found among them that bear the Christian name, will not let the church, the house of God, be in peace, and deserve that it should not; but that he should let them alone to punish themselves and one another.

But the nearer we approach, on earth, to the heavenly state, which only a more copious and general pouring forth of the blessed Spirit will infer, the more capable we shall be of *inward* and *outward* prosperity both together. Then will our differences vanish of course. The external pompousness of the church will be less studied, the life and spirit of it much more; and if I may express my own sense, as to this matter, it should be in the words of that worthy ancient,* namely, That supposing an option or choice were left me, I would choose to have lived in a time when the temples were less adorned with all sorts of marbles, the church not being destitute of spiritual graces. In the mean time, until those happier days come, wherein Christians shall be of one heart and one way, happy are they that can attain so far to bear one another's yet remaining differences. And who, since it is impossible for all to worship together within the walls of the same material temple, choose ordinarily to do it, where they observe the nearest approach to God's own rule and pattern; and where, upon experience, they find most of spiritual advantage and edification, not despising, much less paganizing those that are built with them upon the same foundation, because of circumstantial dis-

* ἄιρεσίς μοι. Isidor. Pelusi, L. 2. Eph. 236.

agreements; nor making mere circumstances, not prescribed by Christ himself, the measures and boundaries of Christian communion, or any thing else that Christ hath not made so: who abhor to say (exclusively) Christ is here, or there, so as to deny him to be any where else; or to confine his presence to this or that party; or to a temple so or so modified, by no direction from himself. And if any through mistake, or the prejudices of education and converse, be of narrower minds, and will refuse our communion, unless we will embrace their's upon such terms as to abandon the communion of all other Christians, that are upon the same bottom with ourselves and them; even as to them we retain a charitable hope, that our blessed Lord will not therefore exclude them; because, through their too intense zeal for the little things, whereof they have made their partition-wall, they exclude us. If again, we be not too positive, or too prone to dispute about those minute matters that have been controverted by the most judicious and sincere servants of our Lord, on the one hand, and the other, in former days, and with little effect; as if we understood more than any of them; had engrossed all knowledge; and wisdom were to die with us! and that with our bolt too suddenly shot, we could out-shoot all others that ever had gone before us: if our minds be well furnished with humility, meekness, modesty, sincerity, love to God, and his Christ, and our brethren, no otherwise distinguished, than by their visible avowed relation to him: this will constitute us such temples, as whereunto the blessed God will never refuse his presence. And do more to keep the Christian church in a tolerable good state, until the παλιγγενεσία, the *times of restitution* come, than the most fervent disputations ever can.

IV. And so I shall take leave of this subject, in hope that through the blessing of God, it may be of use to some that shall allow themselves to read and consider it. Only I request such as are weary of living as without God in the world, that they defer not to invite, and admit the divine presence; until they see all agreed about every little thing that belongs to his temple, or that may be thought to belong to it, but resolve upon what is plain and great, and which all that are serious, that have any regard to God, or their own everlasting well-being, cannot but agree in, that is, forthwith to "lift up the everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." Do it without delay, or disputation. Let others dispute little punctilios with one another as they please; but do not you dispute this grand point with him. Look to Immanuel; con-

sider Him in the several capacities, and in all the accomplishments, performances, acquisitions, by which He is so admirably fitted to bring it about, that God may have his temple in your breast. Will you defeat so kind, and so glorious a design? Behold, or listen, doth he not stand at the door, and knock? Rev. 3. 20.

Consider as exemplary, the temper of the royal psalmist, how he sware—how he vowed—I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eye-lids, until I have found out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God! Ps. 132. Yours is a business of less inquisition, less expense! His temple is to be within you. Lament, O bitterly lament, the common case, that he may look through a whole world of intelligent creatures, and find every breast, until he open, shut up against him! All agreeing to exclude their most gracious rightful Lord, choosing rather to live desolate without him!

The preparation, or prepared mansion, is a penitent, purged, willing heart! Fall down and adore this most admirable and condescending grace; that the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, who having made a world, and surveying the work of his own hands, inquires, "Where shall be my house, and the place of my rest?" and thus resolves it himself: "The humble, broken, contrite heart! there, there, I will dwell!"

If you have such a temple for him, *dedicate it.* Make haste to do so: doubt not its suitableness. It is his own choice, his own workmanship; the regenerate new creature. He himself, as Immanuel, hath procured and prepared it, knowing what would be most grateful, most agreeable to him: to the most exalted Majesty; the most profound, humble, self-abasement. Upon this consummative act, the dedicating of this temple, I might here fitly enlarge; but having published a discourse already some years ago, under this title of *Self-dedication;* (which you may either find annexed to this, or have apart by itself, at your own choice;) thither I refer you. And because this must be a living temple; there is also another extant, upon these words: *Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead.* That also, such as are inclined may, through God's gracious assisting influence, with eyes lift up to heaven, peruse unto some advantage.

SELF-DEDICATION

DISCOURSED

IN

The Anniversary Thanksgiving

OF

A PERSON OF HONOUR

FOR

A GREAT DELIVERANCE.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, EARL OF KILDARE,

BARON OF OPHALIA,

FIRST OF HIS ORDER IN THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND.

My Lord,

I LITTLE thought when, in so private a way, I lately offered much of the following discourse to your Lordship's ear, I should receive the command (which I am not now, so far as it proves to me a possible one, to disobey or further to dispute) of exposing it thus to the view of the world, or so much as to present it to your Lordship's own eye. It was indeed impossible to me to give an exact account of what was then discoursed, from a memory that was so treacherous, as to let slip many things that were prepared and intended to have been said that day; and that could much less (being assisted but by very imperfect memorials) recollect every thing that was said, several days after. Yet I account, upon the whole, it is much more varied by enlargement, than by diminution; whereby, I hope, it will be nothing less capable of serving the end of this enjoined publication of it. And I cannot doubt but the injunction proceeded from the same pious gratitude to the God of your life, which hath prompted, for several years past, to the observation of that domestic annual solemnity, in memory of your great preservation from so near a death.* That the remembrance of so great a mercy might be the more deeply impressed with yourself, and improved also (so far as this means could signify for that purpose) to the instruction of many others.

Your Lordship was pleased to allow an hour to the hearing of that discourse. What was proposed to you in it, is to be the business of your life. And what is to be done continually, is once to be thoroughly done. The impression ought to be very inward, and strong, which must be so lasting as to govern a man's life. And were it as fully done as mortality can admit, it needs be more solemnly renewed at set times for that purpose. And indeed, that such a day should not pass you without a fall, nor that fall be without a hurt, and that hurt proceed unto a wound, and that wound not to be mortal, but even next to it, looks like an artifice and contrivance of Providence to shew you how near it could go without cutting through that slender thread of life, that it might endear to you its accurate superintendency over your life, that there might here be a remarkable juncture in that thread, and that whensoever such a day should revolve in the circle of your year, it might come again, and

* By a fall from a horse, Dec. 5, 1674.

again, with a note upon it under your eye, and appear ever to you as another birth-day, or as an earlier day of resurruction.

Whereupon, my honoured Lord, the further design of that providence is to be thoroughly studied, and pondered deeply. For it shews itself to be, at once, both merciful and wise, and as upon the one account it belonged to it to design kindly to you, so, upon the other, to form its design aptly, and so as that its means and method might fitly both serve and signify its end. If therefore your Lordship shall be induced to reckon the counsel acceptable which hath been given you upon this occasion, and to think the offering yourself to God, a living sacrifice, under the endearing obligation of so great a mercy is, indeed, a reasonable service; your life by that dedication acquires a sacredness, becomes a holy, divine life. And so by one and the same means is not only renewed and prolonged in the same kind of natural life, but is also heightened and improved to a nobler and far more excellent kind. And thus, out of that umbrage only and shadow of death, which sat upon one day of your time, springs a double birth and resurrection to you. Whereby (as our apostle speaks in another place of this epistle) you come to yield yourself to God as one alive from the dead.

So your new year (which shortly after begins) will always be to you a fresh setting forth in that new and holy course of life, which shall at length (and God grant it to be, after the revolution of many fruitful years, wherein you may continue a public blessing in this wretched world) end, and be perfected in a state of life not measured by time, wherein you are to be ever with the Lord. Which will answer the design of that merciful providence towards you; and of this performance (how mean soever) of

Your Honour's most obedient,

Humble Servant,

JOHN HOWE.

SELF-DEDICATION.

Rom. 12. 1.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

TWO things are more especially considerable in these words:—The matter of the exhortation, that we would "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service." And the pathetic form of obtestation that is used to enforce it. "I beseech you by the mercies of God." The former I intend for the principal subject of the following discourse, and shall only make use of the other for the purpose unto which the holy apostle doth here apply it. Our business therefore must be, to shew the import of this exhortation. In the doing whereof we shall—Explain the terms wherein the text delivers it. And—Declare more distinctly the nature of the thing expressed by them.

I. We shall explain the terms which the text employs in this exhortation.

By *bodies*, we are to understand our whole-selves, expressed here (synecdochically) by the name of bodies for distinction's sake. It having been wonted heretofore, to offer in sacrifice the bodies of beasts, the apostle lets them know they are now to offer up their own: meaning, yet, their whole man, as some of these following words do intimate; and agreeably to the plain meaning of the exhortation, (1 Cor. 6. 20.) "Glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his."

Sacrifice is not to be understood in this place in a more restrained sense, than as it may signify whatsoever is by God's own appointment dedicated to himself. According to the stricter notion of a sacrifice, its more noted general distinction (though the Jewish be variously distributed*) is into propitiatory and gratulatory or eucharistical. Christianity in that

* See Sigonius de Repub. Heb, Dr. Outr. de Sacr.

strict sense, admits but one, and that of the former sort. By which One (that of himself) our Lord hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. We ourselves, or any service of ours, are only capable of being sacrifices by way of analogy, and that chiefly to the other sort. And so all sincere Christians are "as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 2. 5.) being both temple, priests, and sacrifices, all at once; as our Lord himself, in his peculiar sacrificing, also was.

In the addition of *living*, the design is carried on of speaking both by way of allusion and opposition to the ritual sacrificing. By way of allusion. For a *morticinum*, any thing *dead of itself*, the Israelites were not to eat themselves, (Deut. 14. 21.) because they were a holy people; (though they might give it to a stranger;) much more had it been detestable, as a sacrifice to God. The beast must be brought alive to the altar. Whereas then we are also to offer our bodies, a living sacrifice, so far there must be an agreement. Yet also, a difference seems not obscurely suggested. The victim brought alive to be sacrificed, was yet to be slain in sacrificing: but here, living may also signify continuing to live. You, as if he should say, may be sacrifices, and yet live on. According to the strict notion we find given of a sacrifice it is somewhat, to be in the prescribed way destroyed, and that must perish in token of their entire devotedness to God who offer it. When we offer ourselves,* life will not be touched by it or at all impaired, but improved and ennobled highly by having a sacredness added to it. Your bodies are to be offered a sacrifice, but an unbloody one. Such as you have no cause to be startled at, it carries no dread with it, life will be still whole in you. Which shews by the way, it is not an inanimate body, without the soul. But the bodily life is but alluded to and supposed, it is a higher and more excellent one, that is meant; the spiritual, divine life, as *ch.* 6. 13. yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead. And *v.* 11. shews what that being alive means, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Alive by a life which means God, which aims at him, terminates in him, and is derived to you through Christ. As he also speaks, Gal. 2. 19, 20. I am dead to the law, that I might live to God. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet

* Cloppenburg. Schol. Sacrific. and others.

not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Holy though it be included in the word sacrifice, is not in the Greek θυσία, and was therefore added without verbal tautology. And there were, however, no real one. For there is a holiness that stands in an entire rectitude of heart and life, by which we are conformed in both, to the nature and will of God, besides the relative one which redounds upon any person or thing by due dedication to him. And which former is pre-required, in the present sacrifice, that it may be, as it follows,

Acceptable to God, not as though thereby it became acceptable, but as that without which it is not so. Yet also holiness, in the nature of the thing, cannot but be grateful to God or well-pleasing, (as the word here used signifies, εὐάρεστον,) but not so as to reconcile a person to him, who was before a sinner, and hath still sin in him. But supposing the state of such a person first made and continued good, that resemblance of himself cannot but be pleasing in the eyes of God, but fundamentally and statedly in and for Christ, as 1 Peter 2. 5. (before quoted.) This therefore signifies, both how ready God is to be well pleased with such a sacrifice, and also signifies the quality of the sacrifice itself, that it is apt to please.

Reasonable service, or *worship*, as the word signifies. This also is spoken accommodately, to the notion given before of offering ourselves, in opposition to the former victims wherein beasts were the matter of the sacrifice. Those were brute sacrifices. You are to offer reasonable ones. And it signifies our minds and understandings the seat of reason, with our wills and affections that are to be governed by it, must all be ingredient as the matter of that sacrifice; implying also the right God hath in us, whence nothing can be more reasonable than to offer ourselves to him.

Present, that is, dedicate, devote yourselves, set yourselves before God, as they *sistere ad altare—present at the altar*, the destined sacrifices, make them stand ready for immolation. You are so to make a tender of yourselves as if you would say, "Lord, here I am, wholly thine. I come to surrender myself, my whole life and being, to be entirely and always at thy disposal, and for thy use. Accept a devoted, self-resigning soul!" Thus we are brought to the thing itself. Which now,

II. In the next place (with less regard to the allusive terms)

we come more distinctly to open and explain. It is briefly but the dedicating of ourselves: or, as it is 2 Cor. 8. 5. the giving our ownselves to the Lord. So those Macedonian converts are said to have done. And there is a special notice to be taken therein of the word *first*, which puts a remarkableness upon that passage. The apostle is commending their liberal charity towards indigent necessitous Christians: and shews how their charity was begun in piety. They did not only, most freely give away their substance for the relief of such as were in want, but first they gave their ownselves to the Lord.

But that we may not misconceive the nature of this act, of giving ourselves, we must know it is not donation in the strict and proper sense, such as confers a right upon the donee, or to him to whom a thing is said to be given. We cannot be said to collate, or transfer a right to him who is before, *Dominus absolutus;* the only proprietor and *supreme Lord* of all. It is more properly but a tradition, a surrender or delivery of ourselves, upon the supposal and acknowledgment of his former right; or the putting ourselves into his possession, for his appointed uses and services, out of which we had injuriously kept ourselves before. It is but giving him his own, (1 Chron. 29. 14.) "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." It is only a consent, and obedience to his most rightful claim, and demand of us, or a yielding ourselves to him, as it is significantly expressed in the mentioned Rom. 6. 13. Though there the word is the same with that in the text, παρίστημι, or παριστάνω, which here we read *present*.

And now that we may more distinctly open the nature of this self-dedication, we shall shew what ought to accompany and qualify it, that we may be a suitable and grateful present to him, in evangelical acceptation, worthy of God, such as he requires and will accept.

1. It must be done with knowledge and understanding. It cannot but be an intelligent act. It is an act of religion and worship, as it is called in the text. Service we read it, which is much more general, but the word is λατρεία—*worship*. It is indeed the first and fundamental act of worship. And it is required to be a rational act. Your reasonable service. Religion cannot move blindfold. And though knowledge and reason are not throughout words of the same signification and latitude; yet the former is partly presupposed upon the latter, and partly improved by it, nor can therefore be severed from it. In the present case it is especially neces-

sary that we distinctly know and apprehend the state of things between God and us: that we understand ourselves to have been (with the rest of men) in an apostasy, and revolt from God, that we are recalled unto him, that a Mediator is appointed on purpose through whom we are to approach him, and render ourselves back unto him: that so this may be our sense in our return, "Lord, I have here brought thee back a stray, a wandering creature, mine ownself. I have heard what the Redeemer, of thy own constituting, hath done and suffered for the reconciling and reducing of such, and, against thy known design, I can no longer withhold myself."

2. With serious consideration. It must be a deliberate act. How many understand matters of greatest importance, which they never consider, and perish by not considering what they know! *Consideration* is nothing else but the revolving of what we knew before: the actuating the habitual knowledge we had of things: a more distinct reviewing of our former notices belonging to any case, a recollecting and gathering them up, a comparing them together; and, for such as appear more momentous, a repeating, and inculcating them upon ourselves, that we may be urged on to suitable action. And this, though of itself without the power and influence of the Divine Spirit, is not sufficient, yet being the means he works by, is most necessary to our becoming Christians, that is, if we speak of becoming so, not by fate or by chance, as too many only are, but by our own choice and design: which is the same thing with dedicating ourselves to God through Christ, whereof we are discoursing. For upon our having thus considered and comprehended the whole compass of the case in our thoughts, either the temper of our hearts would be such that we would hereupon dedicate ourselves or we would not; if we would, it is because we should judge the arguments for it more weighty than the objections, which, without such pondering of both, we are not likely to apprehend, and so, for want of this consideration are never likely to become Christians at all. Or, if we would not, it is because to the more carnal temper of our hearts, the objections would outweigh. And then, if we do seem to consent, it is because what is to be objected came not in view: and so we should be Christians to no purpose. Our contract with the Redeemer were void in the making, we should only seem pleased with the terms of Christianity, because we have not digested them in our thoughts. So our act undoes itself in the very doing. It carries an implicit, virtual repentance in it, of what is done. We enter ourselves Chris-

tians, upon surprise or mistake. And if we had considered what we are, consequently, to do, what to forbear, what to forego, what to endure, would not have done it. And therefore when we do come distinctly to apprehend all this, are like actually to repent and revolt. As they John 6. who, while they understood not what it was to be a Christian, seemed very forward followers of Christ. But when they did more fully understand it, upon his telling them plainly, went back and walked no more with him. And he lets them go; as if he should say, "Mend yourselves if you can; see where you can get a better master."

3. With a determinate judgment, at length, that this ought to be done. There are two extremes in this matter. Some will not consider at all, and so not do this thing; and some will consider always, and so never do it. Stand, Shall I? Shall I? Halt between two opinions. These are both of them very vicious and faulty extremes in reference to the management even of secular affairs, both of them contrary to that prudence which should govern our actions, that is, when men will never consider what is necessary to be done, and so neglect their most important concernments; or, when they will never have done considering, which is the same thing, as if they had never taken up any thought of the matter at all. Indeed, in the present case, it is a reproach to the blessed God to consider longer, than till we have well digested the state of the case. As if it were difficult to determine the matter, between him and the devil, which were the better, or more rightful Lord! We must at last be at a point, and come to a judicious determination of the question, as those sincerely resolved Christians had done, (John 6. 68, 69.) who also express the reasons that had (before that time no doubt) determined them: "Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

4. With liberty of spirit, having thrown off all former bonds, and quite disengaged ourselves from other masters. As they speak, Isa. 26. 13. "Other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." For our Saviour expressly tells us, "No man can serve two masters," Mat. 6. 24. When those *Deditîtii*, the people of Collatia, (Livius, *l.* 1.) were about the business of capitulating in order to the surrender of themselves, the question put, on the Romans' part, was, *Estne populus Collatinus in sua potestate—Are the Collatine people in their*

own power? Wherein satisfaction being given, the matter is concluded. In the present case of yielding ourselves to God, the question cannot be concerning any previous tie in point of right, or that could urge conscience. There cannot be so much as a plausible pretender against him. But there must be a liberty, in opposition to the pre-engaged inclinations and affections. And this must be the sense of the sincere soul, entreating the matter of its self-surrender, and dedication, with the great God, to be able to say to the question, Art thou under no former contrary bonds? "Lord, I am under none, I know, that ought to bind me, or that justly can, against thy former sovereign right. I had indeed suffered other bonds to take place in my heart, and the affections of my soul, but they were bonds of iniquity, which I scruple not to break, and repent that ever I made, I took myself indeed to be my own, and have lived to myself, only pleased and served and sought myself as if I were created and born for no other purpose, and if the sense of my heart had been put into words, there was insolence enough to have conceived such as these; not my tongue only, but my whole man, body and soul, all my parts and powers, my estate and name, and strength, and time, are all my own; who is Lord over me? And while I pleased myself with such an imagined liberty and self-dominion, no idol was too despicable to command my homage. I have done worse than prostrated my body to a stock, my soul hath humbled itself, and bowed down to a clod of clay. My thoughts and desires, and hopes and joys, have all stooped to so mean trifles, as wealth, or ease, or pleasure, or fame, all but so many fragments of earth, or (the less consistent) vapours sprung from it. And whereas this world is nothing else but a bundle of lusts, none of them was too base to rule me. And while I thought myself at liberty, I have been a servant to corruption. But now Lord I have through thy mercy learned to abandon and abhor myself. Thy grace appearing, hath taught me to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Thou hast overcome; enjoy thine own conquest. I am grieved for it, and repent from my soul that ever I did put thee to contend for, and conquer thine own." And so doth this self-dedication carry in it repentance from dead works, and towards God.

5. With a plenary full bent of heart and will. As that, "I have sworn, and will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments," Ps. 119. 106. Or, that, "I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always unto the end," *v.* 112.

And herein doth this *self-dedication* more principally consist, namely, in a resolved willingness to yield myself, as God's own property, to be for him and not for another. Which resolvedness of will, though it may in several respects admit of several names, or be clothed with distinct notions, is but one and the same substantial act. It may be called, in respect of the *competition* which there was in the case, *choice:* or in respect of the *proposal* made to me of such a thing to be done, *consent*. But these are, abstracting from these references, the *same act*, which, in itself considered, is only a resolute volition. "I will be the Lord's." Which resolution, if one do, (whether mentally or vocally,) direct to God or Christ, then it puts on the nature of a vow; and so is fitly called devoting one's self.

It carries in it, as a thing supposed, the implanted divine life and nature, whereby we are truly said to *present ourselves living sacrifices*, as in the text, or as it is expressed in that other place, *ch.* 6. 13. "To yield ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead; (as *v.* 11.) alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord." Which life is not to be understood simply, but in a certain respect. For before, we were not dead simply, we were not dead, disinclined, or disaffected to every thing, but peculiarly towards God and his Christ. That way we were without any inclination, motion, tendency, or disposition. And so were dead *quoad hoc—as to this thing*, or in this respect: were alienated from the life of God. Now we come to live this life, and are made by his grace to incline and move towards him, of our own accord. Dead things (or destitute of life) may be moved by another, are capable of being moved violently, without, or against inclination, hither or thither. But a living creature can spontaneously move itself, as of its own accord it inclines.

And whereas there are two more noble principles, that belong to this divine life and nature, faith and love. (A great and noted pair, as may be seen in divers places of the New Testament.) These have both an ingrediency into this *self-dedication*. The nature of each of them runs into it, and may be perceived in it. And it is hereupon a mixed act, partaking an influence and tincture, as it were, from the one and the other of them.

Faith respects the promises of God, and what we are thereupon to expect from him. And so our dedicating ourselves, to God, is a self-committing. We give up ourselves to him as a trust, as the apostle's emphatical expression intimates, (2 Tim. 1. 12.) "I know whom I have believed, and I am

persuaded that he will keep that which I have committed unto him," παρακαταθήκην μου—*my pawn* or *pledge*, my *fidei commissum* against that day. The soul flies to God as in a distress, not knowing to be safe another way. As once a people, not able to obtain tutelage on other terms, surrendered themselves to them whose help they sought, with some such expression, *Si non nostros, saltem vestros—If not as ours, yet at least as your own*, save, protect, and defend us. Nor, in our surrendering ourselves to God, is this any way unsuitable either to us or to him. Not to us; for we are really distressed, ready to perish; it is agreeable to the state of our case. Not to him; for it is glorious to him; a thing worthy of God to be a refuge, and sanctuary to perishing souls; and is thereupon a pleasant thing, a Godlike pleasure, suitable to a self-sufficient, and all-sufficient Being, who hath enough for himself and for all others, whom he shall have taught not to despise the riches of his goodness. He "taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and them that hope in his mercy," Ps. 147. 11. He waits that he may be gracious, and is exalted in shewing mercy, Isa. 30. 18. He lifts up himself when he does it, and waits that he may; expects the opportunity, seeks out meet and suitable objects, (as with thirst and appetite, an enterprising, valiant man is wont to do encounters, for none were ever so intent to destroy, as he is to save,) yea, makes them, prepares them for his purpose. Which he doth not, and needs not do, in point of misery, so they can enough prepare themselves; but in point of humility, sense of their necessity and unworthiness, great need, and no desert, nor disposition to supplicate. These are needful preparations, make it decorous, and comely to him to shew mercy. A God is to be sought, with humble, prostrate veneration. And such an opportunity he waits for. It is not fit for him; not great, not majestic, to throw away his mercies upon insolent and insensible wretches: for, as there it follows, he is the God of judgment, a most accurate, judicious wisdom and prudence conducts and guides all the emanations of his flowing goodness. The part of which wisdom and judgment is to nick the opportunity, to take the fit season when mercy will be most fitly placed; best attain its end; relish best; be most acceptable to them that shall receive it, and honourable to him that shews it. And therefore (as is added) "blessed are they that wait for him," that labour to be in a posture to meet him on his own terms and in his own way.

Let such as have a mind to surrender and yield themselves to him consider this. Apprehend you have undone yourselves,

and are lost. Fall before him. Lie at the foot-stool of the mercy-seat. Willingly put your mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope. And there is hope. He seeks after you, and will not reject what he seeks, he only waited to bring you to this. It is now a fit time for him, and a good time for you. And you may now, in resigning, intrust yourselves also to him: for his express promise is your sufficient ground for it. "I will receive you, and be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters," 2 Cor. 6. 18. Understand the matter aright; your presenting, and yielding yourselves to him is not to be a desperate act. It is not casting yourselves away. You are not throwing yourself into flames, but upon tender mercies, thither you may commit yourself. The thing that is pleasing to him, and which he invites you to, (as he invites all the ends of the earth to look to him that they may be saved, Isa. 45. 22.) cannot be unsafe, or unhappy to you.

Again, love hath a great ingrediency into this self-resignation. And as it hath, so it more admits to be called dedicating, or devoting ourselves. This holy, ingenuous principle respects more the commands of God, as the other doth his promises, and eyes his interest, as the other doth our own. This dedition of ourselves, as it is influenced by it, designs the doing all for him we can, as by the other it doth the receiving all. As by the other we resign ourselves to him for safety and felicity; so we do by this for service and duty to our uttermost. And an ardent lover of God thinks this a little oblation. Myself! Alas! What am I? Too small a thing for him who is all love, and who, though he hath it in hand to transform and turn me into love too, such as so drossy, and limited a thing was capable of being made, how mean yet, and little is the subject he hath to work upon! An atom of dust! Not combustible, or apt to be wrought upon to this (to a divine and heavenly love) by any, but his flame. And now therefore but a minute spark from the element of love, that must, however, thus transformed, tend towards its own original and native seat! It shall now flame upward. And this is all the flame, in which it is universally necessary, thy sacrifice should ascend: which will refine only, not consume it. Though, that it may be offered up in other flames, is not impossible; nor will it be much regretted by you; if the case should so require, nor shall be despised by him, if he shall so state the case. To give the body to be burned, without love, goes for nothing; but if in that way, we were called to offer up our bodies, living sacrifices to God, it would (in an inferior sense) be an offering of a sweet smell-

ing savour, would even perfume heaven, and diffuse fragrant odours on earth: nor would be grudged at by that love that first made our ὁλόκληρον, the *whole of ourselves*, an offering to God; and whose property it is to be all things, to do all things, to bear all things, to endure all things for him, whose we wholly are. So that if he design any of us to be an ὁλοκάυστωμα too, a *whole burnt offering*, and will have us to glorify him in the fire, love will not retract its vow, but say, after our great Pattern, "Not my will, but thine be done:" and as he, in his peculiar case and design, (not communicable with us, though the temper of spirit should be,) "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! A body hast thou (it now appears for this very purpose) prepared for me."—"He loved us, and gave himself for us." So are we, from our love of him, to give ourselves for him, and his use and service, in whatsoever kind he shall appoint and prescribe. Every true Christian is, in the preparation of his mind, a martyr; but they are few whom he actually calls to it. Our love is ordinarily to shew itself in our keeping his commandments; and with that design we are to present ourselves to him, as the resolved, ready instruments of his service and praise: as Rom. 6. 13. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Thus having been more large upon what was more essential in this dedication of ourselves, I shall be briefer in most of the other things belonging to it.

6. It must further be done with a concomitant acceptance of God. His covenant (which is now entered) is oftentimes summed up, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people:" and is resembled and frequently represented by the nuptial contract, in which there is mutual giving and taking. We are to resign and accept at the same time: to take him to be our God, when we yield ourselves to be his.

7. With an explicit reference to the Lord Christ. We are to dedicate ourselves, after the tenor of a covenant whereof he is the Mediator. God doth not upon other terms treat with sinners. You are not to offer at such a thing as dedicating yourselves to him, but in the way and upon the terms upon which you are to be accepted. The divine pleasure is declared and known, how great a one He must be in all the transactions of God with men; yea, and towards the whole creation, Eph. I. 6—10. "He hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness

of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself: that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." We must take heed how we neglect or overlook Him who is by divine appointment so high in power, and with whom we have so great a concern.

8. With deep humility and abasement of ourselves, in conjunction with a profound reverence and veneration of the Divine Majesty. There ought to be the lowliest self-abasement, such as that good man expresses, Ezra 9. 6. (varied to one's own case,) "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for mine iniquities are increased over mine head, and my trespass is grown up unto the heavens." And indeed this is naturally consequent upon what was last said, of the regard that ought to be had in this matter to the Mediator; for surely that very constitution is in itself a humbling thing to us; and we cannot apply ourselves to God suitably to it, but with a self-abasing sense of our own state and case. Our coming and tendering ourselves to God in a Mediator, is in its very nature a humiliation, and carries with it a tacit confession, that in ourselves we have nothing, deserve nothing, are nothing, are worse than nothing; and that only this constitution of his could justify our offering ourselves to him, with any hope of acceptance; or make it less than an insolent presumption, for sinners to approach him, and expect to be received into his presence and service. It is not for such as we, to behave ourselves towards him as if we either had not offended, or were capable of expiating our own offence. Yea, and if there had been nothing of delinquency in the case; yet great humility becomes such applications to him, and that in conjunction with the profoundest reverence and veneration of him; for our very business in this *self-dedication*, is *worship*, as the word in the text hath been noted to signify. And it is the first and most principal part of all the worship we owe to him, (as was noted from 2 Cor. 8. 5.) fundamental to all the rest. We must have before our eyes the awful majesty and glorious greatness of God; which Scripture often speaks of, as *one notion* of his *holiness*, and which we are to have principal reference unto in all the solemn homage we pay to him; as sacrifices (Outr. de Sac.) are well observed to have been offered to him

so considered. And therefore, by this consideration, their suitableness to him is to be measured, as he doth himself insist, Mal. 1. 14. "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."

9. With great joy and gladness of heart. It ought to be accompanied with the highest gusts and relishes of pleasure, both from the apprehensive congruity of the thing, and the expectation we have of acceptance. The thing itself should be pleasant to us. We are to do it as tasting our own act, as they did, 1 Chron. 29. 9. "The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly." The self-devoting person should be able to utter this as his sense, "Glad am I, that I am any thing, that I have a being, a soul, a reasonable intelligent being, capable of becoming a sacrifice to him." And that there is hope of being accepted: how great a joy is that? The apostle makes so great a thing of it, that he speaks (2 Cor. 5. 8, 9.) as if he cared not whether he was in the body, or out of the body, so he might be accepted. Nuptials (that resemble, as hath been said, this transaction between God and the soul, wherein there is mutual giving and accepting) are wont to be seasons of great festivity and gladness. The great God himself rejoices in this closure, with such a joy, (Isa. 62. 5. As a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so will thy God rejoice over thee,) and shall not we? How infinitely more amiable and delectable is the object of *our* choice than *his!* when *we* are to rejoice in the supreme and most perfect excellency; *He*, in what is clothed over (if he did not superinduce another clothing) with most loathsome deformity.

10. With an ingenuous candour and simplicity, with that sincerity which is to be as the salt of our sacrifice: (Mark 9.) without latent reserves, or a hidden meaning, disagreeing to his; which were both unjust and vain. Unjust; for we may not deceive any. And vain; for we cannot deceive him. The case admits not of restrictions, it must be done absolutely, without any limitation or reserve. You have heard this *self-dedication* is, in part, an act of love. And what limit can be set to a love, whose object is infinite? A natural limit it is true, as it is the love of a creature, it cannot but have; but a chosen one it ought never to have, as if we had loved enough. You know what kind of love is (and cannot but be) due to the all-comprehending God. With all thy heart, soul, mind, and might,

&c. So without exception, that Maimonides,* reciting those words, adds, *etiamsi tollat animam tuam.* The stream of thy love to him must not be diverted, or alter its course, *though he would take away thy very life, or soul.*

11. With the concomitant surrender to him of all that we have. For they that, by their own act and acknowledgment, are not themselves their own, but devoted, must also acknowledge they are owners of nothing else. In that mentioned form of surrender in Livy, when Egerius, on the Romans' part, had inquired, † *Are you the ambassadors sent by the people of Collatia that you may yield up yourselves and the Collatine people?* and it was answered, *We are:* and it was again asked, *Are the Collatine people in their own power?* and answered, *They are:* it is further inquired, *Do you deliver up yourselves, the people of Collatia, your city, your fields, your water, your bounds, your temples, your utensils, all things that are yours, both divine and human, into mine, and the people of Rome's power?* They say, *We deliver up all.* And he answers, *So I receive you.* So do they who deliver up themselves to God, much more, all that they called their's. God indeed is the only Proprietor, men are but usufructuaries. They have the use of what his providence allots them; He reserves to himself the property; and limits the use so far, as that all are to be accountable to him for all they possess; and are to use nothing they have, but as under him and for him, as also they are to do themselves. Therefore as they are required to "glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his," so they are to "honour him with their substance," upon the same reason. But few effectually apprehend his right in their persons; which as we are therefore to recognise in this dedication of ourselves to him, so we are, in a like general sense, to devote to him all that we enjoy in the world. That is, as all are not to devote themselves specially to serve him in a sacred office, but all are obliged to devote themselves to his service in the general; so, though all are not required to devote their estates to this or that particular pious use, they are obliged to use them wholly for his glory in the general, and for the service of his interest in the world. We are obliged

* De fund. legis. p. 64.

† Estisne vos legati oratoresque missi à populo Collatino, ut vos populumque Collatinum dederitis? Sumus.——Deditisne vos, populum Collatinum, urbem, agros, aquam, terminos, delubra, utensilia divina, humanaque omnia, in meam populique Romani ditionem? Dedimus. At ego recipio Liv. ubi priùs.

neither to withhold from him, nor mispend, these his mercies; but must "live righteously," (wherein charity is comprehended,) "soberly, and godly" in it; decline no opportunities that shall occur to us (within the compass of our own sphere and station) of doing him (though never so costly and hazardous) service; must forsake all and follow him, when our duty, and our continued possessions of this world's goods, come to be inconsistent; must submit patiently to our lot, when that falls out to be our case, or to any providence by which we are bereaved of our worldly comforts, with that temper of mind, as to be able cheerfully to say, "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

It is indeed the greatest absurdity imaginable, that they who are not masters of themselves, should think it permitted them, to use what comes to their hands, as they list; for the service of their own lusts, and the gratifying of a rebel flesh, that hath rejected the government of their own reason, and of all divine laws at once: or that he who hath so absolute a right in them, should not have that right in what he hath committed to them, as to prescribe rules to them, by which to use and employ it. At the same time, and in the same sense, wherein we make a dedition of ourselves, we do the same thing as to all that we have. Even according to common, human estimate, according to what interest men have in others, or power over them, they have a correspondent interest in what they possess. They that *absolutely surrender themselves* to the power of another, leave not themselves capable of proper dominion as to any thing. Therefore says the civil law, *Non licet deditîtiis testamenta facere—Those who have surrendered themselves, are not allowed to dispose of their own property.* They were so under several notions, it is true; but they that were strictly so, *had not power to make a will*, as having nothing to dispose of. No man has certainly a power to dispose of any thing (and when they surrender themselves by their own act and deed to God, they acknowledge so much) otherwise than as divine rules direct or permit. They have a right in what is duly their's, against the counter-claim of man, but none, sure, against the claim and all-disposing power of God, whether signified by his law or by his providence. Therefore with this temper of mind should this *self-dedication* be made: "Lord, I here lay myself, and all that belongs to me, most entirely at thy feet. All things are of thee:" (as they are brought in saying, who make that willing, joyful offering, 1 Chron. 29.)

"What I have in the world is more thine, than mine. I desire neither to use nor possess any thing, but by thy leave and for thy sake."

12. With befitting circumstantial solemnity; that is, it ought to be direct, express, and explicit; not to be huddled up in tacit, mute intimations only. We should not content ourselves that it be no more than implied, in what we do otherwise, and run on with it as a thing that must be supposed, and taken for granted, never actually performed and done. It is very true indeed, that a continued, uniform course and series of agreeable actions, a holy life and practice, carry a great deal more of significancy with them, than only having once said, without this *conceptis verbis—form of words*, "Lord, I will be thine." Practice, whether it be good or bad, more fully speaks our sense, and expresses our hearts, than bare words spoken at some particular time, can do, for they at the most speak but our present sense at that time, and perhaps do not always that; but a course of practice shews the habitual posture and steady bent of our spirits. Nor do I think that a formal, explicit transaction, in this matter, whether vocal or mental, with circumstantial solemnity, is essential to a man's being a Christian, or a holy man. A fixed inclination and bent of heart towards God, followed (as it will be) with a course of practice becoming them that are his, will no doubt conclude a man's state to be safe and good God-ward; as one may, on the other hand, be the devil's servant all his days, without having made a formal covenant with him. But yet, though so explicit and solemn a transaction of this matter be not essential to our Christianity, (as what is said to belong only to the solemnity of any thing, is therein implied not to be of the essence of it,) yet it may be a great duty for all that, and I doubt it not to be so.

And it may here be worth the while, to insist a little; that if this indeed be a duty, it may obtain more in our practice, than perhaps it doth. Some, through mere inadvertency, may not have considered it; others, that have, may possibly think it less needful, because they reckon it was formerly done for them. They were born of Christian parents, who dedicated them to God from their birth; and they were, with solemnity, presented to him in their baptism. What need we then do over again a thing already done? Let us reason this matter therefore a while, and consider whether, nowithstanding any such allegation, our personal dedicating ourselves to

God in Christ be not still reasonable and necessary to be performed by ourselves also, as our own solemn act and deed? It were indeed much to be wished that our baptismal dedication to God were more minded and thought on than it commonly is; when with such sacred solemnity we were devoted to the triune Deity, and those great and awful names were named upon us, the name of the Father, the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Ghost. Baptisms are, it is to be feared, too often in the Christian world turned into a mere pageantry, and the matter scarce ever thought on more, when the shew is over; and very probably because this great succedaneous duty is so unpractised among Christians.

(1.) And let it be considered, Are there no like cases? Do we not know, that though all the infants in a kingdom are born subjects, yet when they arrive to a certain age they are obliged, being called, to take the oath of allegiance, and each one to come under personal obligation to their prince? And do we owe less to the God that made us, and the Lord that bought us with his blood?

Again, Though all the sons of Israelites were in their infancy dedicated to God by the then appointed rite for that purpose, yet how frequent were their solemn, personal recognitions of his covenant; their avouching themselves to be his people, as he also avouched himself to be their God: which we see Deut. 26. and in many other places. It is remote from me to intend the pressing of a covenant that contains any disputable or doubtful matters, or any other than the substance of our baptismal covenant itself, consisting of the known essentials of our Christianity, all summed up in taking God in Christ for our God, and resigning ourselves to him to be inviolably his: no more is meant than that this may be done as our own reasonable service and worship; as our intelligent, deliberate, judicious act and choice.

(2.) And consider further, to this purpose, the great importance of the thing itself, compared with the lesser concernments wherein we use to deal most explicitly. Is it fit that a man's religion should be less the matter of his solemn choice, than his inferior concerns? that when he chooses his dwelling, his calling, his servant, or master, he should seem thrown upon his God and his religion by chance? and that least should appear of caution, care, and punctual dealing, in our very greatest concernment? How great a day in a man's life doth he count his marriage-day! How accurate are men wont to be, in all the preparations and previous settlements that are to be made in

order to it! And since the great God is pleased to be so very particular with us, in proposing the model and contents of his covenant, the promises and precepts which make his part and ours in it; how attentive should we be to his proposals, and how express in our consent! especially, when we consider his admirable condescension in it, that he is pleased (and disdains not) to capitulate with the work of his hands, to article with dust and ashes. Is it reasonable we should be slight and superficial in a treaty with that great Lord of heaven and earth, or scarce ever purposely apply and set ourselves to mind him in it at all?

(3.) Moreover it is *your own* concernment, and therefore ought to be transacted *by yourself*. So far as there is any equity in that rule, *Quod tangit omnes debet ab omnibus tractare—What concerns all should be transacted by all*, it resolves into this, and supposes it, *Quod tangit meipsum debet tractare a meipso—That which concerns myself should be transacted by myself.*

Again, your being devoted by parents, no more excuses from solemn, personal, self-devoting, than their doing other acts of religion for you, excuses you from doing them for yourselves. They have prayed for you, are you therefore never to pray for yourselves? They have lamented your sin, are you never therefore to lament your own?

(4.) Consider further, Scripture warns us not to lay too much stress upon parental privilege, or place too much confidence in it, which it supposes men over apt to do, Mat. 3. 7—9. Abraham's seed may be a generation of vipers. John 8. 37, 44. I know you are Abraham's seed, yet he finds them another father.

(5.) Consider moreover, the renewing work of God's grace and Spirit upon souls, consists in sanctifying their natural faculties, their understandings, consciences, wills, affections. And what are these sanctified for, but to be used and exercised? And to what more noble purpose? If there be that holy impress upon the soul, that inclines all the powers of it God-ward, what serves it for, but to prompt and lead it on to the correspondent acts? to apprehend and eye God, to admit a conviction of duty, and particularly, how I owe myself to him; to choose, love, fear, and serve him; and what doth all this import less, than an entire *self-resignation* to him? So that the genuine tendency of the holy new nature is in nothing so directly answered and satisfied as in this. And it ought to be considered, that the faculties of our reasonable souls have a

natural improvement and perfection, as well as a gracious. And for their highest and noblest acts, it is fit they should be used in their highest perfection. It is possible, that in the children of religious parents, there may be some pious inclinations betimes; and the sooner they thereupon choose the God of their fathers, the better, that is, if you compare doing it and not doing it, it is better done, than not done. But because this is a thing that cannot be too often done, nor too well; the more mature your understanding is, the better it will be done, the grace of God concurring. Our Lord himself increased in wisdom, &c.

(6.) Moreover, let it be seriously thought on (what it is dreadful to think) the occasion you will give, if you decline this surrendering yourselves, to have your *neglect* taken for a *refusal*. It is impossible, when you once understand the case, you can be in an indifferency about it. You must either take, or leave.

(7.) Nor can it be denied but personal self-devoting, one way or other, (more or less solemn,) is most necessary to the continuing serious Christianity in the world. Without it, our religion were but *res unius ætatis—the business of an age:* for how unlikely were it, and absurd to suppose, that a man should seriously devote his child to God, that never devoted himself? And if that were done never so seriously, must one be a Christian always, only by the Christianity of another, not his own? Some way or other then, a man must devote himself to God in Christ, or be, at length, no Christian. And since he must, the nature of the thing speaks, that the more solemn and express it is, the better, and more suitable to a transaction with so great a Majesty.

And hath not common reason taught the world to fix a *transitus*, and *settle some time or other*, wherein persons should be reckoned to have past out of their state of infancy or minority, into the state of manhood or an adult state; wherein, though before, they could not legally transact affairs for themselves, yet afterwards they could? This time, by the constitutions of several nations, and for several purposes, hath been diversely fixed. But they were not to be looked upon as children always. Some time they come to write man. Is it reasonable one should be a child, and a minor in the things of God and religion, all his days? always in nonage? Sometime they must be men in understanding, (1 Cor. 14. 20.) and have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, Heb. 5. 14.

Yea, and there is far greater reason we should personally

and solemnly transact this great affair with God, than any concern we have with men. For, among men we may have a right by natural descent, or by valuable considerations, to what we enjoy, which may be clear and little liable to question: from God we have no right, but by his favour and vouchsafement. You are his children, if ever you come to be so, but by adoption. And human adoption has been wont to be completed by a solemnity; the person to adopt, being publicly asked (in that sort of adoption which was also called arrogation) *utrum eum quem adoptaturus esset, justum sibi filium esse vellet—whether he would have this person to be as his own very son?* And again; *ille qui adoptabatur—utrum id fieri pateretur—he that was to be adopted, whether he was contented it should be so?**

Nor again is there that disinclination towards men, as towards God, or that proneness to revolt from settled agreements, with the one, as with the other. Whereas love sums up all the duty of both the tables; or which we owe both to God and man; it is evident that, in our present lapsed state, our love to God is more impaired, than to man. Indeed this latter seems only diminished, the other is destroyed, and hath, by nature, no place in us; grace only restores it. Where it is in some measure restored, we find it more difficult to exercise love towards God, than man; which the apostle's reasoning implies, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4. 20. Who sees not that sensuality hath buried the rational world! Unregenerate man is said to be in the flesh, not as being only lodged in it, as all are alike, but governed by it, under its power: as the holy apostle is said to have been in the Spirit on the Lord's day, Rev. 1. To be in the flesh is expounded by being and walking after it, Rom. 8. Hence men only love and savour the things within this sensible sphere. They that are after the flesh, do savour only the things of the flesh. Where the regenerate, divine life is implanted, it doth *male habitare—is ill lodged*, in conjunction with a strong remaining sensual inclination: so that where the soul is somewhat raised by it, out of that mire and dirt, there is a continual decidency, a proneness to relapse, and sink back into it. Impressions therefore of an invisible Ruler and Lord (as of all unseen things) are very evanid; soon, in a great degree worn off; especially where they were but in making, and not yet

* Cal. Lex. Jurid.

thoroughly inwrought into the temper of the soul. Hence is that instability in the covenant of God. We are not so afraid before, nor ashamed afterwards, of breaking engagements with him, as with men, whom we are often to look in the face, and converse with every day.

Therefore there is the more need here of the strictest ties, and most solemn obligations, that we can lay upon ourselves. How apprehensive doth that holy, excellent governor, Joshua, (Josh. 24.) seem of this, when he was shortly to leave the people under his conduct! And what urgent means doth he use, to bring them to the most express, solemn dedication of themselves to God, that was possible; first representing the reasonableness and equity of the thing, from the many endearing wonders of mercy (as here the apostle beseeches these Romans by the mercies of God) which he recounts from the beginning, to the 14th verse of that 24th chapter: then, thereupon exhorting them to "fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity," &c. in that 14th verse, telling them, withal, if they should all resolve otherwise to a man, what his own resolution was, (*v.* 15.) "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" taking also their express answer, which they give, *v.* 16—18. But fearing they did not enough consider the matter, he, as it were, puts them back (esteeming himself to have gotten an advantage upon them) that they might come on again with the more vigour and force. "Ye cannot serve the Lord: for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord: and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good," *v.* 19, 20. Hereupon, according to his expectation and design, they reinforce their vow, "Nay, but we will serve the Lord." And upon this, he closes with them, and takes fast hold of them, "Ye are witnesses" (saith he) "against yourselves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him." And they say, "We are witnesses," *v.* 22. He exhorts them afresh, and they engage over again, *v.* 23, 24. Thus a covenant is made with them, *v.* 25. After all this, a record is taken of the whole transaction; it is booked down, (*v.* 26.) and a monumental stone set up, to preserve the memory of this great transaction. And the good man tells them, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it

hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." So he dismisses them, and lets them go every one to his inheritance.

Nor is it to be neglected that Isa. 44. 5. (which is generally agreed to refer to the times of the gospel) it is so expressly set down, "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." In the rendering of which words, "*subscribe with the hand*," the versions vary. Some read, *inscribe in their hands*, the Lord's name; counting it an allusion to the ancient custom, as to servants and soldiers, that they were to carry, stamped upon the palm of their hands, the name of their master or general. The Syriac read to the same sense as we—Shall give an hand writing to be the Lord's. That the thing be done, and with great seriousness, distinctness, and solemnity, is no doubt highly reasonable and necessary; about the particular manner I prescribe not.

Nor can I imagine what any man can have to object, but the backwardness of his own heart to any intercourse or conversation with the invisible God: which is but an argument of the miserable condition of depraved mankind; and none, that the thing is not to be done. For, that backwardness must proceed from some deeper reason than that God is invisible: a reason, that should not only convince, but amaze us, and even overwhelm our souls in sorrow and lamentation, to think what state the nature and spirit of man are brought into! For is not the devil invisible too? And what wretch is there so silly and ignorant, but can by the urgency of discontent, envy, and an appetite of revenge, find a way to fall into a league with him? Is this, that God is less conversable with men? less willing to be found of them that seek Him? No surely, *but that men have less mind and inclination to seek Him! And is this a posture and temper of spirit towards the God that made us, (the continual spring of our life and being!) in which it is fit for us to tolerate ourselves? Shall not the necessity of this thing, and of our own case, (not capable of remedy while we withhold ourselves from God,) overcome all the imagined difficulty in applying ourselves to Him?

Use. And upon the whole, if we agree the thing itself to be necessary, it cannot be doubted, but it will appear to be

* Read considerately, Heb. 11. 6.

of common concernment to us all; and that every one must apprehend it is necessary to me, and to me, whether we have done it already, or not done it. If we have not, it cannot be done too soon; if we have, it cannot be done too often. And it may now be done, by private, silent ejaculation, the convinced, persuaded heart saying within itself, "Lord, I consent to be wholly thine, I here resign and devote myself absolutely and entirely to thee." None of you know what may be in the heart of another, to this purpose, even at this time. Why then should not every one fear to be the only person of those who now hear, that disagrees to it? If any find his heart to reluctate and draw back, it is fit such a one should consider, "I do not know but this self-devoting disposition and resolution is the common sense of all the rest, even of all that are now present but mine." And who would not dread to be the only one in an assembly, that shall refuse God! or refuse himself to him! For, let such a one think, "What particular reason can I have to exclude myself from such a consenting chorus? Why should I spoil the harmony, and give a disagreeing vote? Why should any man be more willing to be dutiful and happy than I? to be just to God, or have him good to me? Why should any one be more willing to be saved than I; and to make one hereafter, in the glorious, innumerable, joyful assembly of devoted angels and saints, that pay an eternal, gladsome homage to the throne of the celestial King?" But if any find their hearts inclining, let what is now begun, be more fully completed in the closet; and let those walls (as Joshua's stone) hear, and bear witness!

Lest any should not consent, and that all may consent more freely, and more largely; I shall in a few words shew—what should induce to it,—and what it should induce to.

1. What should induce to it? You have divers sorts of inducements.

(1.) Such as may be taken from necessity. For what else can you do with yourself? You cannot be happy without it, for who should make you so but God? and how shall he, while you hold off yourselves from him? You cannot but be miserable, not only as not having engaged him to you, but as having engaged him against you.

(2.) Such as may be taken from equity. You are his right. He hath a natural right in you as he is your Maker, the Author of your being: and an acquired right as you were bought by his Son, who hath redeemed us to God, (Rev. 5. 9.) and who died, rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of

the living and the dead, here, to rule, hereafter, to judge us. Both which he can do whether we will or no: but it is not to be thought he will save us against our wills. His method is, whom he saves, first to overcome, that is, to make them "willing in the day of his power." And dare we, who "live, move, and have our being in him," refuse to be, live, and move to him? or "deny the Lord who bought us?"

(3.) And again, Such as may be taken from ingenuity, or that should work upon it, namely, (what we are besought by, in the text,) "the mercies of God." How manifold are they! But they are the mercies of the gospel especially, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, which are thus refered unto in the beginning of this, the transferring what the Jews forfeited and lost, by their unbelief, unto us Gentiles; that "mystery" (as this apostle elsewhere calls it, Eph. 3. 4—6.) "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:" (In reference whereto he so admiringly cries out a little above the text, (*ch.* 11. 33.) Ὦ βάθος, "O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!") the mercies of which it is said, Isa. 55. 1—3. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Which free and sure mercies are heightened, as to us, by the same both endearing and awful circumstance, that these mercies are offered to us, namely, in conjunction with the setting before our eyes the monitory, tremendous example of a forsaken nation that rejected them, intimated v. 5. "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee:" a case whereof our apostle says, in the foregoing chapter, (Rom. 10. 20.) Isaiah was very bold; when, speaking of it in another place, (Isa. 65. 1.) he uses these words, "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not

called by my name." He was bold in it indeed, to mention such a thing to a people, unto whom a jealous gloriation in the peculiarity of their privileged state, their being without partners or rivals, for so long a time, in their relation and nearness to God, was grown so natural: and who took it so impatiently, when our Saviour did but intimate the same thing to them by parables, (Mat. 21. 33—46.) as that they sought immediately to lay hands on him for that very reason. So unaccountable a perverseness of humour reigned with them, that they envied to others, what they despised themselves.

But on the other hand, nothing ought more highly to recommend those mercies to us, or more engage us to accept them with gratitude, and improve them with a cautious fear of committing a like forfeiture, than to have them brought to our hands, redeemed from the contempt of the former despisers of them; and that, so terribly, vindicated upon them at the same time; as it also still continues to be. That the natural branches of the olive should be torn off, and we inserted: that there should be such an instance given us of the severity and goodness of God, *ch.* 11. (To them that fell, severity; but to us, goodness, if we continue in his goodness, to warn us that, otherwise, we may expect to be cut off too! and that we might apprehend, if he spared not the natural branches, he was as little likely to spare us!) that when he came to his own and they received him not, he should make so free an offer to us, that if we would yet receive him (which if we do, we are, as hath been said, to yield up and dedicate ourselves to him at the same time) we should have the privilege to be owned for the sons of God! what should so oblige us to compliance with him, and make us with an ingenuous trembling fall before him, and (crying to him, My Lord and my God) resign ourselves wholly to his power and pleasure?

And even his mercies more abstractly considered ought to have that power upon us. Were we not lost? Are we not rescued from a necessity of perishing, and being lost for ever, in the most costly way? costly, to our Redeemer, but to us, without cost. Is it a small thing, that he offers himself to us as he doth when he demands us, and requires that we offer ourselves to him: that he, in whom is all the fulness of God, having first offered himself for us, doth now offer himself also to us: that he hath treated us, hitherto, with such indulgence, waited on us with so long patience, sustained us by so large bounty? And now upon all, when it might be thought we should be communing with our own hearts, discoursing the matter with our-

selves, "What shall we render?" that he should say to us so shortly and compendiously, Render yourselves. Is that too much? Are we too inconsiderable to be his, or his mercies too inconsiderable to oblige us to be so? the mercies that flow so freely from him, for he is the Father of mercies: the mercies that are so suitable to us, pardon to the guilty, light to them that dwell in darkness, life to the dead, a rich portion and all-sufficient fulness for the poor, indigent, and necessitous: the mercies that we are encouraged to expect as well as what we enjoy: the great good laid up in store! the mercies of eternity to be added to those of time: the mercies of both worlds, meeting upon us! that here, we are to keep ourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life! (Jude 21.) that, looking for that blessed hope, our life may here, in the mean time, be transacted with him, that we may abide in the secret of his presence, and dwelling in love, may dwell in God who is love; till the season come, when we shall be able more fully to understand his love, and return our own!

Nor are the favours of his providence to be thought little of in the time of our earthly pilgrimage. And now, if all this do effectually induce us to dedicate ourselves,

2. We are next to consider what our having done it, ought further to induce us unto.

In the general, it ought to be an inducement to us (as we may well apprehend) to behave ourselves answerably to such a state, as we are hereby brought into, if we now first dedicated ourselves to him, and are confirmed in, by our iterations of it. For he takes no pleasure in fools, therefore having vowed ourselves to him, to serve, and live to him, let us pay what we have vowed. Better it had been not to vow, than to vow and not pay; and instead of the reasonable sacrifice he required of us, to give him only the sacrifice of fools. We are, upon special terms, and for special ends, peculiar to the most high God. They that are thus his, are "a royal priesthood, He hath made us kings and priests." Rev. 1. 6. Both those offices and dignities have sometime met in the same person. And to God and his Father, that is, for him. Not that both those offices do terminate upon God, or that the work of both is to be performed towards him, but our Lord Jesus, it being the design of his Father we should be brought into that high and honourable station, hath effected it, in compliance with his design, and hath served his pleasure and purpose in it. He hath done it to, that is, for him. So that, to God

and his Father may be refered to Christ's action, in making us kings and priests, not to ours, being made such. Yet the one of these refers to God immediately, the other to ourselves. Holy and good men are kings in reference to themselves, in respect of their self-dominion into which they are now restored, having been, as all unregenerate persons are, slaves to vile and carnal affections and inclinations. The minds of the regenerate are made spiritual, and now with them the refined, rectified, spiritual mind, is enthroned; lifted up into its proper authority over all sensual inclinations, appetitions, lusts and passions. A glorious empire! founded in conquest, and managed afterwards, when the victory is complete, (and in the mean time, in some degree, while "judgment is in bringing forth unto victory,") by a steady, sedate government in most perfect tranquillity and peace.

But they are priests in reference to God; the business of their office, as such, terminates upon him; for him they worship and serve. Worship is either social, external and circumstantial, that of worshipping societies, considered according to its exterior part, wherein one is appointed by special office to do the part of a priest for the rest; (in this sense all are not priests;) or else it is solitary, internal, substantial and spiritual, wherein they either worship alone, and apart by themselves, or being in conjunction with others, yet their own spirits within them work directly, and aspire upwards to God. And as to this more noble part of their worship, every holy man is his own priest.

And this is the double dignity of every holy, devoted soul. They are thus kings, and priests; govern themselves, and serve God. While they govern, they serve: exercise authority over themselves, with most submiss veneration of God: crowned, and enthroned; but always in a readiness to cast down their crowns at the footstool of the supreme, celestial throne. Into this state they come by *self-dedication.* And now surely, it is not for such to demean themselves at a vulgar rate. They are of the ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων—*the church of the first-born written in heaven;* (Heb. 12. 23.) that is, the church of the first-born ones; that is, all composed and made up of such; (as that expression signifies;) first-born, in a true (though not the most eminent) sense, being sons by the first, that is, the prime and more excellent sort of birth, in respect whereof they are said to be begotten again (James 1. 18.) by the word of truth, that they should be a kind of first-fruits of the creatures of God. And this twofold dignity is the privilege of their birthright,

as anciently it was. Are you devoted to God? Have you dedicated yourselves? Hereby you are arrived to this dignity. For in the above-mentioned place (Heb. 12.) it is said, "Ye are come;" you are actually, already, adjoined to that church, and are the real present members of that holy community. For you are related and united to him of whom the family of heaven and earth is named; (Eph. 3.) are of the household, and the sons of God, his, under that peculiar notion, when you have dedicated yourselves to him. You cannot but apprehend there are peculiarities of behaviour in your after-conduct and management of yourselves that belong to you, and must answer and correspond to your being, in this sense, his. Some particulars whereof I shall briefly mention.

(1.) You should each of you often reflect upon it, and bethink yourself what you have done, and whose you now are. "I am the devoted one of the most high God." It was one of the precepts given by a Pagan (Epict.) to his disciples, "Think with yourself, upon all occasions, I am a philosopher." What a world of sin and trouble might that thought, often renewed, prevent, "I am a Christian, one devoted to God in Christ." Your having done this thing, should clothe your mind with new apprehensions, both of God and yourselves: that he is not now a stranger to you, but your God, that you are not unrelated to him, but his. "I was an enemy, now am reconciled. I was a common, profane thing, now holiness to the Lord." It is strange to think how one act doth sometimes habit and tincture a man's mind; whether in the kind of good or evil. To have committed an act of murder! What a horrid complexion of mind did Cain bear with him hereupon. To have dedicated one's self to God, if seriously and duly done; would it have less power to possess one with a holy, calm, peaceful temper of mind?

(2.) You should, hereupon, charge yourself with all suitable duty towards him; for you have given yourself to him to serve him; that is your very business. You are his, and are to do his work, not your own, otherwise than as it falls in with his, and is his. You are to discharge yourself of all unsuitable cares; for will not he take care of his own, who hath put so ill a note upon them that do not? He that provideth not for his own, (his domestics,) those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel? Will you think, he can be like such a one? Who, if not the children of a prince, should live free from care?

You should most deeply concern yourself about his con-

cernments, without any apprehension or fear that he will neglect those that are most truly yours: and are not to be indifferent how his interest thrives, or is depressed in the world; is increased, or diminished. They that are his, should let his affairs engross their cares and thoughts.

You should abandon all suspicious, hard thoughts of him. When in the habitual bent of your spirits you desire to please him, it is most injurious to him, to think he will abandon, and give you up to perish, or become your enemy. It is observable what care was taken among the Romans, *Ne quid deditiis hostile illatum sit—that no hostility might be used towards them that had surrendered themselves.* Can men excel God in praise-worthy things? You can think nothing of God more contrary to his gospel, or his nature, than to surmise he will destroy one that hath surrendered to and bears a loyal mind towards him. And what a reproach do you cast upon him, when you give others occasion to say, "His own, they that have devoted themselves to him, dare not trust him?" You are taught to say, "I am thine, save me;" not to suspect he will ruin you. They do strangely misshape religion, considering in how great part it consists in trusting God, and living a life of faith, that frame to themselves a religion made up of distrusts, doubts, and fears.

You should dread to alienate yourselves from him, which (as sacrilege is one of the most detestable of all sins, a robbing of God) is the most detestable sacrilege. You are to reserve yourselves entirely for him. Every one that is godly he hath set apart for himself, Ps. 4.

Yea, and you are not only to reserve, but to your uttermost, to improve and better yourselves for him daily: to aspire to an excellency, in some measure, suitable to your relation: "to walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory," (1 Thess. 2. 12.) remembering you are here to glorify him, and hereafter to be glorified with him. And who is there of us that finds not himself under sufficient obligation, by the mercies of God, unto all this? or to whom he may not say, in a far more eminent sense, than the apostle speaks it to Philemon, "Thou owest even thyself also unto me?" Shall we refuse to give God what we owe? or can we think it fit, itself, "we should be no otherwise his, than (as one well says) fields, woods, and mountains, and brute beasts?" And I may add, can it be comfortable to us, that he should have no other interest in us than he hath in devils? Is there no difference in the case of reasonable creatures and unreasonable? their's who profess devoted-

ness to him, and their's who are his professed enemies? The one sort, through natural incapacity, cannot, by consent, be his, and the other, through an invincible malignity, never will. Are there no mercies (conferred or offered) that do peculiarly oblige us more? Let us be more frequent and serious in recounting our mercies, and set ourselves on purpose to enter into the memory of God's great goodness, that we may thence, from time to time, urge upon ourselves this great and comprehensive duty. And at this time, being here together on purpose, let us consider and reflect afresh upon that eminent mercy which you are wont to commemorate in the yearly return of this day.

And that I may, more particularly, direct my speech the same way, that the voice of that memorable providence is especially directed; you are, my Lord, to be more peculiarly besought by the mercies of God, that you would this day dedicate yourself to him. I do therefore beseech you, by the many endearing mercies which God hath so plentifully conferred upon you, by the mercies of your noble extraction and birth, by the mercies of your very ingenious and pious education, by the mercies of your family, which God hath made to descend to you from your honourable progenitors; (which, as they are capable of being improved, may be very valuable mercies;) by the blood and tender mercies of your blessed and glorious Redeemer, who offered up himself a Sacrifice to God for you, that you would now present yourself to God, a holy, living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service. I add, by the signal mercy which hath made this a memorable day to you, and by which you come, thus long, to enjoy the advantages of all your other mercies. How came it to pass that this day comes not to be remembered by your noble relatives, as a black and a gloomy day, the day of the extinction of the present light and lustre of your family, and of quenching their coal which was left? You had a great Preserver, who we hope delivered you because he delighted in you. Your life was precious in his sight. Your breath was in his hand; he preserved and renewed it to you, when you were ready to breathe your last. And we hope he will vouchsafe you that greater deliverance, not to let you fall under the charge which was once exhibited against a great man, (Dan. 5. 23.) "The God in whose hands thy breath is——hast thou not glorified:" and make you rather capable of adopting those words, (Ps. 42. 8.) "Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." Your acknowledgments

are not to be limited to one day in the year; but from day to day his loving kindness, and your prayer and praise, are to compose your νυκθήμερον, *day and night;* the one, to shew you, the other, to be unto you your morning and evening exercise. Let this be your resolution, "Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever;" (Ps. 145. 2.) or that, (Ps. 104. 33.) "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being."

Yet your more solemn acknowledgments are justly pitched upon this day. God hath noted it for you, and made it a great day in your time. You have now enjoyed a *septennium, seven years* of mercies. And we all hope you will enjoy many more, which may all be called the posterity of that day's mercy. It was the parent of them all; so pregnant and productive a mercy was that of this day. You do owe it to the mercy of this day, that you have yet a life to devote to the great Lord of heaven and earth, and to employ in the world for him: and would you think of any less noble sacrifice?

Æschines the philosopher, out of his admiration of Socrates, when divers presented him with other gifts, made a tender to him of himself. Less was thought an insufficient acknowledgment, of the worth and favours of a man! Can any thing less be thought worthy of a God? I doubt not you intend, my Lord, a life of service to the God of your life. You would not, I presume, design to serve him under any other notion, than as his. By dedicating yourself to him, you become so in the peculiar sense. It is our part in the covenant which must be between God and us. "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine," Ezek. 16. 8. This is the ground of a settled relation, which we are to bear towards him, as his servants. It is possible I may do an occasional service for one whose servant I am not; but it were mean that a great person should only be served by the servants of another lord. To be served but precariously, and as it were upon courtesy only, true greatness would disdain; as if his quality did not admit to have servants of his own.

Nor can it be thought a serious Christian (in howsoever dignifying circumstances) should reckon himself too great to be his servant, when even a heathen (Seneca) pronounces, *Deo servire est regnare—to serve God is to reign.* A religious nobleman of France (Mounsieur de Renty, whose affection I commend more than this external expression of it) tells us he made a deed of gift of himself to God, signing it with his own

blood. He was much a greater man, that so often speaks in that style, *Thy servant*, that it is plain he took pleasure in it, and counted it his highest glory. "Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear," Ps. 119. 38. "Thy servant, thy servant, O Lord, the son of thy handmaid;" (alluding to the law by which the children of bond-servants were servants by birth;) "thou hast broken my bonds;" (Ps. 116.) hast released me from worse bonds, that I might not only be patient, but glad to be under thine.

Nor was he a mean prince* in his time, who at length abandoning the pleasures and splendour of his own court, (whereof many like examples might be given,) retired and assumed the name of *Christodulus—A servant of Christ*, accounting the glory of that name did outshine, not only that of his other illustrious titles, but of the imperial diadem too. There are very few in the world, whom the too common atheism can give temptation unto to think religion an ignominy, and to count it a reproach to be the devoted servant of the most high God; but have it at hand to answer themselves, even by human (not to speak of the higher angelical) instances, that he hath been served by greater than we.

You are, my Lord, shortly to enter upon the more public stage of the world. You will enter with great advantages of hereditary honour, fortune, friends; with the greater advantage of (I hope) a well cultivated mind, and (what is yet greater) of a piously inclined heart: but you will also enter with disadvantages too. It is a slippery stage; it is a divided time, wherein there is interest against interest, party against party. To have seriously and with a pious obstinacy dedicated yourself to God, will both direct and fortify you.

I know no party in which nothing is amiss. Nor will that measure, let you think it advisable, to be of any, further than to unite with what there is of real, true godliness among them all. Neither is there any surer rule or measure for your direction, than this; to take the course and way which are most agreeable to a state of devotedness to God. Reduce all things else, hither. Wheresoever you believe, in your conscience, there is a sincere design for the interest and glory of God, the honour or safety of your prince, the real good and welfare of your country, there you are to fall in, and adhere. And the first of these comprehends the rest. You

* Cantacuzenus, whose life also, among many other remarkable things, was once strangely preserved in the fall of his horse.

will not be the less inclined, but much the more, to give Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, for your giving God the things that are God's. And that is (as hath been said) principally and in the first place yourself; and then all that is yours to be used according to his holy rules, and for him whose you are.

And what can be to you the ground of a higher fortitude? Can they be unsafe that have devoted themselves to God? Dedicate yourself, and you become a sanctuary (as well as a sacrifice) inviolably safe in what part, and in what respects, it is considerable to be so. And who can think themselves unsafe, being, with persevering fidelity, sacred to God; that understand who he is, and consider his power and dominion over both worlds, the present, and that which is to come; so as that he can punish and reward in both, as men prove false or faithful to him. The triumphs of wickedness are short, in this world. In how glorious triumphs will religion and devotedness to God end in the other!

TWO

SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

THURLOW, IN SUFFOLK,

On those words, Rom. 6. 13,

"YIELD YOURSELVES TO GOD."

TO THE MUCH-HONOURED

BARTHOLOMEW SOAME, Esq.

OF

THURLOW,

AND

SUSANNA, HIS PIOUS CONSORT.

My worthy Friends,

I HAVE at length yielded to your importunity, and do here offer these sermons to public view and your own, which were one day the last summer preached under your roof; attributing more to your pious design herein, than to my own reasons against it. I no farther insist upon the incongruity, having divers years ago published a small treatise of Self-dedication, now again to send abroad another on the same subject. For the way of tractation is here very different; this may fall into the hands of divers, who have never seen the other; and however, they who have read the other, have it in their choice whether they will trouble themselves with this or no. And though your purpose which you urged me with, of lodging one of these little books in each family of the hearers, might have been answered by so disposing of many a better book already extant; yet you having told me how greatly you observed them to be moved by these plain discourses, considering the peculiar advantage of reading what had been with some acceptance and relish heard before, (through that greater vigour that accompanies the ordinance of preaching to an assembly, than doth usually the solitary first reading of the same thing,) I was not willing to run the hazard of incurring a guilt, by refusing a thing so much desired, and which, through God's blessing, might contribute something, though in never so low a degree, to the saving of men's souls. I could not indeed, as I told you, undertake to recollect every thing that was spoken, according to that latitude and freedom of expression wherewith it was fit to inculcate momentous things to a plain country-auditory. But I have omitted nothing I could call to mind; being little concerned that the more curious may take notice, with dislike, how much in a work of this kind I prefer plainness (though they may call it rudeness) of speech, before that which goes for wisdom of words, or the most laboured periods.

May you find an abundant blessing on your household, for the sake of the ark which you have so piously and kindly received. And whereas, by your means, the parts about you have a help for the spreading the knowledge of God among them, added to what they otherwise more statedly enjoy; may the blessing of Heaven succeed all sincere endeavours of both sorts, to the more general introducing of the new man which is renewed in knowledge—"where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all, and in all:" to whose grace you are, with sincere affection, and great sense of your kindness, earnestly recommended by

Your much obliged,

Faithful Servant in Christ,

JOHN HOWE.

TWO SERMONS.

Rom. 6. 13.

Yield yourselves to God.

THESE are but a few words, but I can speak to you of no greater or more important thing than I am to press upon you from them this day. We are above taught how absurd it is to continue in sin, whereto we are avowedly dead, (*v.* 1, 2.) as is signified by our baptism; together with our entrance into a new state of life, and that in both we are to be conformed unto the death and resurrection of Christ, (*v.* 3—5.) so that sin ought now no more to have a new dominion over us, than death can again have over him, *v.* 6—10. We are therefore exhorted so to account of ourselves and of our present state, that "we are dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and thereupon never more to let sin govern us or reign over us, or yield to it, *v.* 11—13. *former part.* But what then? How are we otherwise to dispose of ourselves? If we may not yield ourselves to the service of sin, what are we then to do with ourselves? The text tells us, and the very reason of the thing shews it; *But yield yourselves to God*, &c. The subject to be discoursed of is an express precept, charging it upon us all as our unquestionable duty, to yield ourselves to God; which therefore it can only be our business in speaking to this text, to explain and apply.

I. We are to explain it. Whosoever shall charge upon others such a duty, not obvious, perhaps, at the first view, in the full extent of it, to every one's understanding, may well expect to be asked, "But what do you mean by this precept? or what doth this yielding ourselves to God signify?" And here are two things to be opened to you.—How or under what notions we are to consider God and ourselves in this matter: and—What our yielding ourselves to him, so considered, must include.

First, How or under what notions are we to consider *God* and *ourselves* in this matter?

1. How are we to consider or look upon *God* in this affair?

You are to consider him both as he is in himself, and according to the relations he bears to you; whether before your yielding yourselves to him, or in and upon your so doing.

(1.) As he is in himself. You that have heard, or now read what I have said, and do write, here make a stand, and bethink yourselves a while. What! are you about yielding yourselves to God? Sure you ought to be thinking of it as soon as you hear his claim laid to you. But do you now know with whom you have to do? Too many have the name of God, that great and awful name, in their mouth or ear, and have no correspondent thought in their mind; it passes with them as a transient sound, as soon over as another, common word of no greater length, and leaves no impression. Perhaps there is less in their minds to answer it, than most other words which men use in common discourse. For they have usually distinct thoughts of the things they speak of; otherwise they would neither understand one another nor themselves, but might speak of a horse, and mean a sheep; or be thought to mean so. And it would no more move a man or impress his mind to hear or mention a jest, than a matter of life and death. But the holy and reverend name of God is often so slightly mentioned, as in common oaths, or in idle talk is so merely taken in vain, that if they were on the sudden stopped, and asked what they thought on, or had in their mind, when they mentioned that word, and were to make a true answer, they could not say they thought of any thing: as if the name of God, the *All!* were the name of *nothing!* Otherwise, had they thought what that great name signifies, either they had not mentioned it, or the mention of it had struck their hearts, and even overwhelmed their very souls! I could tell you what awe and observance hath been wont to be expressed in reference to that sacred name, among a people that were called by it; and surely the very sound of that name ought ever to shake all the powers of our souls, and presently form them to reverence and adoration. Shall we think it fit to play or trifle with it, as is the common wont? My friends, shall we now do so, when we are called upon to yield ourselves to God? Labour to hear and think, and act intelligently, and as those that have the understandings of men. And now especially in this solemn transaction, endeavour to render God great to yourselves: enlarge your minds, that as far as is possible and needful, they may take in the entire notion of him. As to what he is in himself, you must conceive of him as *a Spirit*, (John 4. 24.) as his own word, which can best tell us what he is, instructs us,

and so as a Being of far higher excellency than any thing you can see with your eyes, or touch with your hands, or than can come under the notice of any of your senses. You may easily apprehend *spiritual being* to be the source and spring of life and self-moving power. This world were all a dead unmoving lump, if there were no such thing as *spirit;* as your bodies when the soul is fled. You must conceive him to be an *eternal, self-subsisting Spirit*, not sprung up into being from another, as our souls are: but who, from the excellency of his own being, was necessarily of and from himself; comprehending originally and eternally in himself the fulness of all life and being. I would fain lead you here, as by the hand, a few plain and easy steps. You are sure that somewhat now is—of this you can be in no doubt; and next you may be as sure that somewhat hath, of itself, ever been: for if nothing at all now were, you can easily apprehend it impossible that any thing should ever be, or of itself now begin to be, and spring up out of nothing. Do but make this supposition in your own minds, and the matter will be as plain to you as any thing can be, that if nothing at all were now in being, nothing could ever come into being; wherefore you may be sure, that because there is somewhat now in being, there must have been somewhat or other always in being, that was eternally of itself. And then, to go a little farther, since you know there are many things in being that were not of themselves, you may be sure that what was always of itself, had in it a sufficiency of active power to produce other things; otherwise nothing that is not of itself could ever be; as you know that we were not of ourselves; and the case is the same as to whatsoever else our eyes behold.

You must conceive of God therefore as comprehending originally in his own being, which is most peculiar to himself, a power to produce all whatsoever being, excellency, and perfection, is to be found in all the whole creation: for there can be nothing which either is not, or arises not from, what was of itself. And therefore that he is an absolutely, universally, and infinitely perfect Being, and therefore that life, knowledge, wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, truth, and all other conceivable excellencies whatsoever, do all in highest perfection belong, as necessary attributes, unchangeably and without possibility of diminution unto him. And all which his own word (agreeably to the plain reason of things)

doth in multitudes of places ascribe to him; as you that are acquainted with the Bible cannot but know. You must therefore conceive of him, as the All in All. So great, so excellent, so glorious a One he is, to whom you are to surrender and yield yourselves.

You are to conceive of him as most essentially One, for there can be but one All. And so his word teaches you to conceive. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. 6. 4. "We know there is no other God but one," &c. 1 Cor. 8. 4—6. Your thoughts therefore need not be divided within you, nor your minds hang in doubt, to whom you are to betake and yield yourselves: there is no place or pretence for halting between two opinions. He most righteously lays the sole claim to you, a just God and a Saviour, and there is none besides him, Isa. 45. 21. And so we are told often in that and the foregoing chapters. He whose far-discerning eye projects its beams every way, and ranges through all infinity, says he knows not any, *ch.* 44. 8.

Yet again you are to conceive of him as Three in One, and *that*, in your yielding yourselves to him; as the prescribed form, when this surrender is to be made in baptism, directs; which runs thus, *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, Mat. 28. 19. You are not to be curious in your inquiries beyond what is written in this matter, how far the Subsistents in the Godhead are three, and in what sense one; they cannot be both in the same sense. But there is latitude enough to conceive how they may be distinct from each other, and yet agree in one nature: which in none of them depending upon will and pleasure, sets each of them infinitely above all created being: which for the divine pleasure only was and is created, Rev. 4. 11. And that we so far conceive of them as three, as to apprehend some things spoken of one, that are not to be affirmed of another of them, is so plain, of so great consequence, and the whole frame of practical religion so much depends thereon; and even this transaction of yielding up ourselves, (which must be introductive and fundamental to all the rest,) that it is by no means to be neglected in our daily course, and least of all in this solemn business, as will more appear anon. In the mean time, set this ever blessed, glorious God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before your eyes, as to whom (thus in himself considered) you are now to yield yourselves.

(2.) You must conceive of him according to the rela-

tions which he bears towards you, partly before your yielding yourselves to him, and partly in and upon your doing it. That is,

[1.] Before you do any such thing, you must conceive of him,

First, As your Creator, the Author of your being, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, all things are, Rom. 11. 36. He that made you demands you for himself. You are required to yield yourselves to him that gave you breath.

Secondly, As the continual Sustainer of your being; and who renews your life unto you every moment; in whom you live, and move, and have your being (Act. 17. 28.) continually; so that if he should withdraw his supports, you immediately drop into nothing. But these are things common to you with all other creatures; and signify therefore his antecedent right in you, before you have yielded yourselves, upon which you ought to do it, and cannot without great injustice to him decline doing it. There are other considerations also you ought to entertain concerning him in this your yielding yourselves to him, namely, of some things which are partly and in some sense before it, and which it supposes, but which partly also, and in a more special sense, would follow and be inferred by it.

[2.] Therefore you are to consider the relations which he bears to you in your actually doing this. Principally, this fourfold consideration you should have of him in your yielding yourselves to him, namely, as your *Owner*, your *Teacher*, your *Ruler*, and your *Benefactor*, and all these with the addition of *Supreme*, it being impossible he should have a Superior; or that there should be any one above him in any of these. And he is in some sense all these to you before you can have yielded yourselves; (as may in great part be collected from what hath been already said;) but when you yield yourselves to him, he will be all these to you in a far higher, nobler, and more excellent sense; and you are to yield yourselves to him as such, or that in your so doing, he may actually become such to you.

First, As your Owner. The God whose you are, as the apostle speaks, Act. 27. 23. and whom, as it there follows, and is naturally consequent, you are to serve. You were his by a former right, as all things being made by him, are. But you are to yield yourselves to him, that you may be more peculiarly his, in a sense more excellent in itself, and more comfortable to you; as Exod. 19. 5. If you will obey—you shall

be to me a peculiar treasure above all people, for all the earth is mine. Of such as fear him, the great God says, They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels, Mal. 3. 17. Your yielding yourselves adds nothing to his right in you; you therein only recognise and acknowledge the right he had in you before, but it adds to you a capacity and qualification, both by the tenor of his gospel-covenant, and in the nature of the thing, for such nobler uses as otherwise you cannot serve for: as the more contemptible lumber about a man's house may be as truly his, as the most precious things; but neither doth he intend, nor can such meaner things admit to be the ornaments, either of his person, or his house. The great God intends his devoted peculiar people to be to him a crown and a royal diadem, (Isa. 62. 3.) when he puts away the wicked of the earth like dross, Ps. 119. 119. In a great house there are not only vessels of silver and gold, but also of wood and of earth, 2 Tim. 2. 20. But it is only the purged and sanctified soul (which is also a self-devoted one) that shall be the vessel unto honour, being made meet for the master's use, and prepared to every good work, v. 21. Persons and things acquire a sacredness by being devoted to God. Persons especially, that can and do devote themselves, are highly ennobled by it; he hereupon (beside their relative holiness) really more and more sanctifies and frames them for his own more immediate service and communion. Of such a people he tells us, that he hath formed them for himself, and they shall praise him; and to them he saith, (intending it manifestly in the more eminent sense,) Thou art mine, Isa. 43. 1, 7, 21. Such may with a modest and humble, but with a just confidence freely say, I am thine, save me, Ps. 119. 94. In yielding yourselves consider therefore first, that he is your Owner by an unquestionable former right, and let that effectually move you to do it with all your hearts. For will you not give him his own? When you account duty to your prince obliges you to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, will you not give God the things that are God's? And will you not know him for your Owner? The Ox knows his owner, Isa. 1. 3. Or will it satisfy you to be in no other kind his, than brutes and devils are, that either through an incapacity of nature cannot acknowledge him, or through a malignity of nature will not? O yield yourselves, with humble desire and expectation that he will vouchsafe otherwise to own you!

Secondly, As your Teacher; so indeed he also is to all men, though they never yield themselves to him. He that teaches

man knowledge, shall not he know? Ps. 94. 10. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding. Yea and inferior creatures, as they all owe their natures and peculiar instincts to him, may be said to have him for their Teacher too. But will it content you to be so only taught by him? There is another sort of teaching, which if you yield yourselves to him as your great Instructor, he will vouchsafe unto you. The things you know not, and which it is necessary you should know, he will teach you, that is, such things as are of real necessity to your true and final welfare, not which only serve to please your fancy, or gratify your curiosity: for his teaching respects an appointed, certain end, suitable to his wisdom and mercy, and to the calamity and danger of your state. The teaching requisite for perishing sinners, was, what they might do to be saved. And when we have cast about in our own thoughts never so much, we have no way to take but to yield ourselves to God, who will then be our most undeceiving Guide. To whom it belongs to save us at last, to him only it can belong to lead us in the way to that blessed end.

Many anxious inquiries and fervent disputes there have been, how one may be infallibly assured of the way to be saved. They are to be excused who think it not fit, but upon very plain grounds, to venture so great a concernment; or to run so great a hazard in a mere compliment to any man, or party of men. Confident expressions, as, My soul for your's, and such like, signify nothing with a cautious considering man, except that such as them care as little for his soul as their own. The papal infallibility some would have us trust to at a venture, and would make us think it rudeness to doubt it; when nobody stands upon good manners in endeavouring to escape a ruin; when a great part of their own communion trust not to it.* And some of them have written strongly against it. † The accurate stating and discussing of the controversy, how far or in what sense any such thing as infallible light may belong to the Christian church, are not fit for this place, nor for a discourse of this nature. It is enough now to say that this claim hereof to the pope or bishop of Rome, as such,—Cannot be proved, and—May be plainly disproved. *It cannot be proved.* For since no principles of common reason are pretended sufficient to prove it of any man, or of him more than another, it must be proved by supernatural revelation, if at all. But in

* The Gallican church, &c. † Du Pin, &c.

the written word of God there is no such thing. Pretences from thence are too vain to be refuted or mentioned. And if any other revelation should be pretended, it will be a new, and as impossible a task to prove the divinity of that revelation, so as to infer upon the world an obligation to believe it. Nor is it necessary to insist upon this; because *it may be plainly disproved;* for the same thing cannot be both true and false. And it sufficiently disproves such a man's infallibility, or the impossibility of his erring, that it can be evidently proved he hath erred. As when he hath determined against the express word of Christ, forbidding them (to take one or two instances among many) to drink of the eucharistical cup, whom he hath commanded to drink of it; or (to mention a more important one) when believers in Christ, or lovers of him, are pronounced damned, who he hath said shall not perish, but have everlasting life, and the crown of righteousness: or when on the other hand pardon of sin and eternal life are pretended to be given to such, whom the evangelical law condemns to death.

When one to whom this privilege hath been asserted to belong, hath determined against another, to whom upon the same grounds it must equally belong. As it is well known in the Christian church, that pope might be alleged against pope, and one papal constitution against another. Not to insist on what might be shewn out of their own history, that the same pope hath, being so, changed his judgment in a point of doctrine, and left us to divine when he was the fallible, and when the infallible pope. And again,

When there have been determinations against the common uncorrupted senses of mankind, as that what their sight, and touch, and taste assures them is bread, is said to be the flesh of a human body. For if you cannot be sure of what both your own, and the sound senses of any other man would tell you, you can be sure of nothing at all: you cannot be sure you see one another, or hear me speaking to you; nor be sure when you heard the transforming words, "This is my body;" or much less that they were ever spoken, if you heard them not; or that that was bread and not a stone, or a piece of clay, that is pretended to be transubstantiated by them. The foundation of all certainty were upon these terms taken away from among men on earth; and upon the same common grounds upon which it is pretended you ought to believe that which is shewn or offered you to be the flesh of a man, and not bread any longer, you must believe or judge the quite contrary, that it is bread still, and not flesh, and consequently that he is far from being in-

fallible, but doth actually err, upon whose authority you are directed to believe otherwise.

And indeed the claimed infallibility is by this sufficiently disproved, that there is no imaginable way of proving it. For if there were any such thing, it must be by God's own immediate gift and vouchsafement; how otherwise should a man be made infallible? And if so, it must be for an end worthy of a wise and merciful God; whereupon for the same reason for which he should have made such a man infallible, he should have made it infallibly certain to other men, that he hath made him so. Whereas there is no one point wherein his infallible determination can be pretended to be necessary, against which there is not more to be said than against the pretence itself of his infallibility; and for which there is not less to be said than can, with any colour, or without highest and most just contempt, be said for it. The most weighty thing that I have known alleged is, the great expediency of an infallible judge. But if we will think that a good way of arguing, that things are in fact so or so, because we can fancy it would be better if they were; we may as well prove that all mankind are sincere Christians, or there is no sin in the world, nor ever was, and a thousand things besides in the natural world, that never were or will be, because it appears to us it would be for the better. So much is the foolishness of man wiser than God.

Besides that *sanctity* must be judged as necessary to the final salvation and felicity of the souls of men as *orthodoxy*, or exemption from doctrinal error, by all, with whom either Christian religion, or common reason signifies any thing. For the same reason therefore for which it can be thought necessary God should have put it into the power of any man to make others not err, he should have put it equally into his power to make them holy, to renew and change their hearts and lives. But what man hath this power? And one would reasonably expect, if either were, that both powers should be lodged in the same man; which if they should pretend, who assert the other unto one man, their own histories might make them blush, unless they can think it more probable that he can and will effectually sanctify another, and make him holy, who is himself most infamously impure and unholy, than that he can secure another from erring in matters of doctrine, who cannot secure himself. But then it may be said, if such sure light and guidance is not to be found or had

from one man, it must be from some community or body of men in the Christian church. For can it be thought God should have taken care to settle a religion in the world, on purpose for the saving of men's souls, that yet affords no man any certainty of being saved by it?

I answer, yes, there is a certain, undeceiving light afforded by it to the whole body of sincere Christians, sufficient, and intended not to gratify a vain humour, but to save their souls, and which you can only, and may confidently expect by yielding yourselves to God as your Teacher. As it cannot agree with the absolute perfection of his nature to be himself deceived in any thing, it can, you may be sure, as little agree with it to deceive you, or let you mistake your way, in the things wherein he hath encouraged and induced you to commit and entrust yourselves to his conduct and guidance. Will he let a soul wander and be lost, that hath entirely given up itself to be led and taught by him? His word hath at once expressed to you his nature, and his good-will towards you, in this case. "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way," Ps. 25. 8. But what sinners? the next words tell you, the meek (self-resigned ones, humble, teachable learners) he will guide in judgment, or with judgment; (as that particle admits to be read;) he will guide them judiciously, and surely, so that your hearts need not misgive, or suspect, or doubt to follow; "The meek will he teach his way," v. 9. Who would not wish and be glad to have such a Teacher? You shall know (how express is his word!) if you follow on to know the Lord; for, his going forth is prepared as the morning, Hos. 6. 3. You do not need to devise in the morning how to create your own light, it is prepared and ready for you; the sun was made before you were, and it keeps its course, and so constantly will God's own light shine to you, without your contrivance or care, for any thing but to seek, receive it, and be guided by it. Know your advantage in having such a Teacher.

He will teach you *inwardly*; even your very hearts, and so as his instructions shall reach the centre, the inmost of your spirits. God, that made light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 6. And when that holy good man, had been solacing himself with highest pleasure in considering this, that God was his portion, so contentful and satisfying a one, that he cannot forbear saying, The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage,

(Ps. 16. 5, 6.) he presently adds, "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel;" as though he had said, "I should never else have thought of such a thing: it had never come into my mind to think of choosing God for my Portion. I should have done like the rest of the vain world, have followed shadows all my days. My reins also instruct me in the night season." He will so teach you, as to make you teach yourselves, put an abiding word into you, that shall talk with you when you sit in your houses, and walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, and whereby you shall be enabled to commune with your own hearts upon your beds while others sleep; and revolve or roll over in your minds, dictates of life. You will not need to say, Who shall ascend into heaven, (Deut. 30. 11, 12, &c.) to bring down Christ from above? or, Who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ again from the dead? for the word will be nigh thee, not in thy mouth only, but in thine heart, &c. Rom. 10. 6—8. You will have in you an ingrafted word, (Jam. 1. 21.) and the law of your God will be in your heart, so as none of your steps shall slide, Ps. 37. 31. This is our Lord's own interpretation of divers words of the prophets, that in the days of the more general diffusion of holy, vital light, which was to be after his own appearance in the world, "They shall be all taught of God," John 6. 45. that is, so as to have their hearts inclined towards himself, and drawn to him, as the reference of these words to those of the foregoing verse shews. Wherein,

Lies your further advantage, That by him you shall be taught *effectually*. Other teaching doth but reach the ear, or only, at the most, beget some faint notions in the mind, that you are little the better for; his shall produce real fruit; He is the Lord your God who teaches you to profit; and who by gentle and unforcible, but by most prevailing insinuations, shall slide in upon your spirits, win them by light and love, and allure them to a compliance with what shall be in the end safe and happy for yourselves. He will instruct you, though not with a violent, yet with a strong hand, so as not to lose his kind design. Others teach you, and leave you what they found you; convinced perhaps, but not changed; unable to resist any ill inclination, or your disinclination to that which was good. Power will accompany his teaching; a conquering power, that will secretly constrain and captivate your hearts; and how pleasant a victory will that be to yourselves! O the peace and joy you will find springing up within you, when once you feel yourselves overcome! The most that a man

can say to you is, what the prophet Samuel once said, (so great, and so good a man,) "God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way," 1 Sam. 12. 23. He could only shew that way, and pray that God would do the rest; which implies God only can so teach it you, as to make you walk in it. I am not persuading you to slight human teaching; you will need it; and it is among the gifts which your glorious Redeemer, being ascended on high, (Ps. 68. 18.) hath given to men, namely, pastors and teachers, Eph. 4. 11. But understand their teaching to be only subordinate, and ministerial. Without, or against God, you are to call no man master or teacher upon earth. And thus far their teaching is to be regarded, as it agrees,

With what God doth inwardly teach you, by that common light which shines in every man's own bosom that with a sincere mind attends to it, and which is too little attended to. There are truths too commonly held in unrighteousness, seated generally in the minds and consciences of men; by which, though they have not another law, they are a law to themselves; (Rom. 2. 14.) and for the stifling and resisting whereof, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them, *ch.* 1. 18. And from such truths they might infer others, and where God affords external helps, come to discern a sure ground whereupon to understand that what is contained besides in the frame of Christian doctrine is true; being enabled to judge of the evidences that prove the whole revelation thereof to be from God; and nothing being in itself more evident than that what he hath revealed is true. And withal God is graciously pleased to shine into minds that with upright aims set themselves to inquire out and understand his mind; and so farther light comes to be superadded to that which is common. Now take heed how you neglect what a man teaches you, agreeably to that inward light which is already (one way or other) in your own minds and consciences. Hither in some part, and in great part, we are to appeal in our teaching you. So the more early Christian teachers did; "Not handling" (say they) "the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Cor. 4. 2. In the most deeply fundamental things that concern your practice every day, we may appeal to yourselves, and your own consciences. If we say to you, Ought you not to live according to his will that gave you breath? should you not above all things fear and love,

and trust and obey him that made you and all things? Should you not do as you would be done unto? Should you not take more care for your immortal souls, than for your mortal flesh? You must every one say, "I believe in mine own conscience this is so." If I appeal to you in the very thing I am speaking of, should you not yield yourselves to God, whose creatures you are? I doubt not you will any of you say, "I think in my very conscience I should." We have you witnesses against yourselves, if you will not hear us in such things. And again, it being a matter very capable of plain proof, that those writings which we call the Holy Scriptures, were from God, our teaching ought so far to be regarded by you as,

We can manifest to you that it agrees with the Scriptures. And we are sure he will never teach you inwardly any thing contrary to what he hath there taught. Will the God of truth say and unsay the same thing? That were to overthrow the design of all his instructions, and to subvert the authority which he requires men to reverence. No *man* could expect to be regarded on such terms. And by this rule freely examine all that we teach you, as our Saviour directed the Jews to do, John 5. 39. And for the doing whereof, the apostle commended the Berean Christians, Acts 17. 11. And we have here the same advantage at length, though not so immediately, upon your consciences; which cannot but judge that whatsoever is found in that word which you confess to be divine, must be most certainly true. And if within such limits you take the help of men for your instruction; having yielded yourselves to God as your supreme and highest Teacher, you are upon safe terms. Only be sincere in listening to his dictates whether internal or external. Let not a prepossessed heart or vicious inclination be their interpreter: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," &c. John 7. 17.

Thirdly, You must consider God, in your yielding yourselves, as your sovereign Ruler. For to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; as by *v.* 16. Though teaching and ruling may be diversely conceived of, they cannot be separate in this case. The nobler and final part of God's teaching you, is teaching you your duty; what you are to practise and do. And so when he teaches you, he commands you too; and leaves it not arbitrary to you whether you will be directed by him or no. What is his by former right, and by after-consent, and self-resignation, shall it not be governed by him? if it be a subject

capable of laws and government, as such consent shews it to be? Your yielding yourselves to God is not a homage but a mockery, if you do it not with a resolution to receive the law from his mouth: and that whereinsoever he commands, you will to your uttermost obey. But in this and the other things that follow, my limits constrain me unto more brevity. Only let not this apprehension of God be frightful, yea let it be amiable to you, as in itself it is, and cannot but be to you, if you consider the loveliness of his government, the kind design of it, and how suitable it is to the kindest design; that it is a government first and principally over minds, purposely intended to reduce them to a holy and peaceful order, wherein it cannot but continue them, when that kingdom comes to be settled there; which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and all the laws whereof are summed up in love; being such also as in the keeping whereof there is great reward.

Fourthly, You are to consider him, and accordingly to yield yourself to him as your greatest Benefactor, or rather as your best and supreme Good. Indeed you cannot sever his being your Ruler from his being your Benefactor, (more than his being your Teacher from his being your Ruler,) when the tendency and design of his government are understood. For it is a very principal part of our felicity to be under his government, and he doth you the greatest good by ruling you, when otherwise nothing is more evident than that you would run yourselves into the greatest of evil, and soon be most miserable creatures. You are now so far happy as you are subject to his government, and that which it aims at is to make you finally and completely happy. For it is the design of his government, not only to regulate your actions, but your inclinations, and principally towards himself. You have been alienated from the life of God, (Eph. 4. 18.) were become strangers to him, yea and enemies in your very minds; (Col. 1. 21.) for the carnal mind is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. The very business of his government is in the first place to alter the temper of your minds; for continuing carnal, they neither are subject to the law of God, nor can be, as the same place tells you. Therefore if his government take place in you, and you become subject, you become spiritual, the "law of the Spirit of life" having now the possession and the power of you. Nor was it possible he should ever be an effectual Benefactor to you, without being thus an over-powering Ruler; so do these things run into one another. To let you have your own will, and

follow your carnal inclination, and cherish and favour you in this course, were to gratify you to your ruin, and concur with you to your being for ever miserable: which you may see plainly if you will understand wherein your true felicity and blessedness must consist, or consider what was intimated concerning it, in the proposal of this head; that he is to be your Benefactor, in being to you himself your supreme and only satisfying Good. He never doth you good effectually and to purpose, till he overcome your carnal inclination. For while that remains, will you ever mind him? Can you love him, desire after him, or delight in him? The first and most fundamental law which he lays upon you is, that "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and might." What will become of you if you cannot obey this law? This world will shortly be at an end, and you must, it is like, leave it sooner; you are undone, if your hearts be not beforehand so framed as that you can savour and take complacency in a better and higher Good. You will shortly have nothing left you but himself; you will be plucked away from your houses and lands and friends, and all your outward comforts; and now in what a case are you, if you can take no pleasure or satisfaction in God! You are therefore to yield up yourself to him in full union, as with your most grateful and delectable Good; with this sense possessing your soul, Whom have I in heaven but thee, or whom on earth can I desire besides thee? Ps. 73. 25.

And thus you are to look upon God in your yielding yourselves to him.—

You are to yield yourselves to his claim, as your rightful Owner.—To his instruction, as your undeceiving Teacher.—To his government, as your gracious, sovereign Ruler. And—To the enjoyment of him, as your best and most satisfying Good, or your self-communicating Benefactor.

(3.) But it also concerns you to have distinct and right thoughts of the state of your case, and how things are between him and the sons of men, that you may duly apply yourselves to him in so great a transaction. The gospel under which you live tells you, he treats with men in and by a Mediator, his own Son, who came down into this wretched world of ours, in great compassion to our miseries, and took our nature, was here on earth among us as an incarnate God: God manifested in the flesh. Because we were partakers of flesh and blood, he took part with us likewise of the same, and in that nature of ours died for us, to make way that we might yield ourselves to God,

and be accepted. No man now comes to the Father but by him, John 14. 6. He must be acknowledged with great reverence; and a most profound homage must be rendered to him. He that denieth the Son hath not the Father, 1 John 2. 23. And it being his pleasure to treat with us by his Son, and the case requiring that we apply ourselves to him, we are to take notice of him according to those capacities wherein Scripture represents him to us. And it represents him agreeably to those same notions according to which we have shewn we are to consider God the Father in this matter; so as that Christ being the Mediator between him and us, when we yield ourselves to him ultimately, and finally, under the notions that have been mentioned, we are first to yield ourselves to his Son, Christ Jesus our Redeemer, under the like notions. For,

[1.] Being to yield ourselves to God as our Owner, we must know, the Father hath given all things into the hands of the Son, (John 13. 3.) and that He is Lord of all; (Acts 10. 36.) which, in the first sense, signifies him to be, by the Father's constitution, the Owner of all things, even as he is the Redeemer. For, he therefore died and rose again, that he might be Lord of dead and living; (Rom. 14. 9.) that is, of both worlds; agreeably to what he himself speaks immediately upon his resurrection from the dead; All power is given to me both in heaven and earth, Mat. 28. 18.

[2.] And for those other notions of God under which we have shewn we are to yield ourselves to him, as our Teacher, Ruler, and Benefactor, they correspond to that threefold office of Christ, of which you cannot but have heard much, namely, of Prophet, King, and Priest; so that we are to commit ourselves to him, when we yield ourselves to God, as a Teacher come forth from God, and who reveals him to us whom no man hath seen at any time; as one that must reign over us, and over the greatest on earth, (Luke 19. 14. and 27. Ps. 2. 6—10.) and by whom we are to be reconciled to God, and restored to the enjoyment of him, Rom. 5. 11. And because our blind minds and perverse hearts need light and grace from above, to direct and incline us hereto, therefore hath the Spirit of the Father and the Son a great work to do in us to this purpose. Whereupon we are to yield ourselves to that blessed Spirit also, as our Enlightener and Sanctifier; which our being directed to walk in the Spirit, (Gal. 5. 25.) and our being told that they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his, (Rom. 8. 9.) and, that as many as are the sons of God, are led by his Spirit, (v. 14.) do plainly shew.

You see then we are to yield ourselves to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which also our having those great names, named upon us in our baptism, (as we before told you,) doth import. And how necessary all this is, you will see, if,

2. We consider how we are to look upon *ourselves* in this transaction; that is,

(1.) We are to consider ourselves as God's creatures, being, as you have heard, to consider him as our Creator; and so we must reckon we owe ourselves to him, and do but yield him what we owe, and what was his before. For, how can you but be his, who of his mere pleasure hath raised you out of nothing?

(2.) We must remember we have been apostate creatures, such as had fallen, and revolted from him; and so our yielding ourselves to him, is a giving ourselves back to him, having injuriously withdrawn and withheld ourselves from him before. And because the injury was so great as we could never make any recompense for, therefore it was necessary such a Mediator should be appointed between God and us, for whose sake only we can expect to be accepted when we yield ourselves. So great a Majesty was not to be approached by offending creatures without so great a Days-man and Peace-maker.

(3.) We must consider ourselves as impure, and every way unfit for the divine presence, service, and converse, and who did therefore need the power of the Holy Ghost to be put forth upon us to make us fit; and that therefore our case required we should put ourselves into such hands for that purpose.

(4.) We are to consider ourselves as under the gospel, as sinners invited and called back to God; as such whose case is not desperate; or who need to abandon ourselves to ruin, though we have greatly offended, as if there were no hope. We are to consider ourselves with distinction from the condition of other fallen creatures. The angels that fell, and kept not their first station, have no gospel sent to them to invite them back, and persuade them again to yield themselves to God; you have. Into what a transport should this thought put you! how should it mollify you! oh what a yielding temper and disposition of spirit should it work in you towards this gracious call, and just challenge, which the great God now gives you, and makes unto you! Thus far then you see how you are to consider God and yourselves in this your yielding yourselves to him.

SECOND SERMON.—You are next to consider,

Secondly, What your yielding yourselves to God according to such considerations must include, or be accompanied with. For it is not reasonable to think you have no more to mind in this matter, than only what is contained in the bare abstract nature of such an act; but looking upon your case in its circumstances, and considering the state of things between God and you, it greatly concerns you to see to it, that the matter be suitably carried to this state of your case. Whereupon,

1. Your yielding yourselves to God must be accompanied with very deep and serious repentance. It is a most penitential surrender you are now to make of yourselves to him; for you are to remember that you are but now coming back out of a state of apostasy from your sovereign and most rightful Lord. Yea, though you are but renewing your surrender of yourselves, having done somewhat herein before, you are yet to consider this was your case; and perhaps some never have yet seriously thought of any such thing, but lived in this world hitherto as if you were your own, and there were no Lord over you: O then with what inward remorse, with what brokenness of heart, with what relentings and self-accusings should this thing now be done! you should come, smiting upon the thigh, and saying within yourselves, "What have I done? So long, Lord, have I lived in this world of thine, which thou madest, and not I, as if I might do in it, and with myself, what I pleased! I have usurped upon thy unquestionable right in me, have lived to myself, and not to thee; I am now convinced this was a very undutiful, unlawful way of living." Let him hear you (as he once heard Ephraim, or shall do) bemoaning yourselves, and saying, "Turn me and I shall be turned; thou art the Lord my God, &c. Jer. 31. 18, 19. How can you think of yielding yourselves now at length to God, without being deeply sensible of your having deferred it so long, and that you have not done it sooner; and how great the iniquity was of your former course; and that you have all this while committed a continual robbery upon him that gave you breath? Will a man rob God? And if you say, Wherein have I robbed him? You have robbed him of yourself; a greater thing than of tithes and offerings: and this robbery was sacrilege. For every thing due and devoted to God, hath a sacredness upon it; and consider, were you not, upon his just claim, in your baptism devoted to him? How

should this startle you! you have constantly alienated from him a sacred thing! You have been in a continual contest with him about one of the highest rights of his sovereignty, yea and of his Godhead, for to that, nothing is more peculiar, than to be Lord of all. So that the controversy between him and you hath been, Who shall be God? You have refused him his own creature. How high a crime was this! Know then you have been a great transgressor, a grievous revolter, and now therefore yield yourself to him with a melting, broken heart, or you do nothing.

2. It must be done with great deliberation; not as the mere effect of a sudden fright. What is done in a rash haste, may be as soon undone. Leisurely consider, and take the whole compass of the case; weigh with yourselves the mentioned grounds upon which you are to yield yourselves, and the ends you are to do it for, that things may be set right between him and you, that you may return into your own natural place and station, that you may be again stated in that subordination to your sovereign Lord which fitly belongs to you; that he may have his right which he claims, and you the mercy which you need. Here is place for much consideration. And when Israel is complained of as less willing to acknowledge God for his Owner and Master, than the ox and ass were to acknowledge their's, all this is resolved into this, that the people did not consider, Isa. 1.

3. It must be done with judgment, which is the effect of such consideration. When all things have been well weighed that belong to this case, then let this formed judgment pass, "Lord, I ought to be thine, and no other's." Say to him hereupon, with a convinced judgment and conscience, "O God, I surrender myself, as now seeing none hath that right in me that thou hast." When the love of Christ becomes constraining upon souls, it is because they thus judge, that they ought no longer to live to themselves, but to him, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. These things last mentioned will imply a rectified mind, which must be ingredient into this transaction, else it will be defective throughout.

4. It must be done with a fulness of consent; and herein it chiefly consists, when the soul says, "Lord, I am now most entirely willing to be thine." This is your yielding yourselves. And hereby the covenant is struck between God and you; which consists in the expressed consent of the parties covenanting in the matters about which the covenant is. This covenant is about the parties themselves who covenant, as the

conjugal covenant is, which resembles it; namely, that they shall be one another's. God hath expressed his consent in his word and gospel, making therein the first overture to you. When you rejoin your own consent, the thing is done: this being the sum of his covenant, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people," as in many places of Scripture it is gathered up. When therefore, as God hath openly testified his willingness to be their God who shall accept and take him to be so, you also are willing, and do consent too, you do now take hold on his covenant, matters are agreed between him and you; and you may take those words as spoken to you particularly; I have entered into covenant with thee, and thou art become mine, Ezek. 16. 8. But then you must take notice that this is to be done with a *full* consent, which that is said to be which determines you, though it be not absolutely perfect. No grace in any faculty is perfect in this life. But as in human affairs, that will is said to be *full*, which is the spring of answerable, following actions, so it is here. If a man have some inclination to this or that, and do it not, it goes for nothing; if he do it, his will is said to be full, though he have some remaining disinclination. You may be said to yield yourselves to God, with a full consent, when you live afterwards as one devoted to him.

5. Your yielding yourselves to God must carry life in it, as the following words signify; "Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead." It must be a vital act, and have vigour in it. You must be capable of making that true judgment of your case, as it is *v.* 11. "of reckoning truly that you are dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ." Do it as feeling life to spring in your souls towards God in your yielding yourselves to him. What! will you offer God a carcass? not the "living sacrifice," which you see is required, Rom. 12. 1. Beg earnestly for his own Spirit of life and power, that may enable you to offer up a living soul to the living God.

6. There must be faith in your yielding yourselves. For it is a committing, or intrusting yourselves to God, with the expectation of being saved, and made happy by him. So Scripture speaks of it, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, (or trusted,) and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day. It is suitable to the gracious nature of God, to his excellent greatness, to his design, to the mediatorship of his Son, to his promise and gospel-covenant, and to your own necessities, and the exigency of your own

lost, undone state, that you so yield yourselves to him, as a poor creature ready to perish, expecting, not for your sake, but his own, to be accepted, and to find mercy with him. You do him the honour which he seeks, and which is most worthy of a God, the most excellent, and a self-sufficient Being, when you do thus. You answer the intendment of the whole gospel-constitution, which bears this inscription, *To the praise of the glory of his grace*, &c. It is honourable to him when you take his word, that they that believe in his Son, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. You herein set to your seal that he is true, and the more fully, and with the more significancy, when upon the credit of it you yield yourselves, with an assurance that he will not destroy nor reject a poor creature that yields to him, and casts itself upon his mercy.

7. Another ingredient into this yielding of yourselves must be love. As faith, in your yielding yourselves to God, aims at your own welfare and salvation; so love, in doing it, intends his service, and all the duty to him you are capable of doing him. You must be able to give this as the true reason of your act, and to resolve it into this principle; "I yield myself to God, because I love him, and from the unfeigned love I bear to him; to tell the world, if there were occasion, he hath captivated my heart with his excellencies and his love, and hereupon having nothing else, I tender myself to him, to tell himself, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; and because I do, I present myself to thee; it is all I can do. I wish myself ten thousand times better for thy blessed sake; and if I had in me all the excellencies of many thousand angels, I were too mean a thing, and such as nothing but thy own goodness could count worthy thine acceptance; because I love thee, I covet to be near thee, I covet to be thine, I covet to lead my life with thee, to dwell in thy presence; far be it from me to be as without thee in the world as heretofore. I love thee, O Lord, my strength, because thine own perfections highly deserve it, and because thou hast heard my voice, and hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling, and I yield myself to thee, because I love thee. I make an offer of myself to be thy servant, thy servant, O Lord, thou hast loosed my bonds; and now I desire to bind myself in new ones to thee, that are never to be loosed." And you can make no doubt but that it ought to be done therefore with dispositions and a temper suitable to the state you are now willing to come into, that of a devoted servant; namely,

8. With great reverence and humility. For, consider to whom you are tendering yourself; to the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity:" to him that hath heaven for his throne, and earth for his footstool; and in comparison of whom all the inhabitants of the world are but as grasshoppers, and the nations of the earth as the drop of a bucket, and the dust of the balance, &c. Yea to him against whom you have sinned, and before whose pure eyes, you cannot, in yourself, but appear most offensively impure; so that you have reason to be ashamed and blush to lift up your eyes before him.

9. And yet it surely ought to be with great joy and gladness of heart, that he hath expressed himself willing to accept such as you, and that he hath made you willing to yield yourselves. The very thought should make your heart leap and spring within you, that he should ever have bespoken such as we are to yield ourselves to him, when he might have neglected us, and let us wander endlessly, without ever looking after us more. How should it gladden your hearts this day, to have such a message brought you from the great God, and which you find is written in his own word, to yield yourselves to him! Should not your hearts answer with wonder: "And blessed Lord! Art thou willing again to have to do with us, who left thee having no cause, and who returning can be of no use to thee!" O blessed be God that we may yield ourselves back unto him! that we are invited and encouraged to it. And you have cause to bless God, and rejoice, if this day you feel your heart willing to yield yourselves to him, and become his. Do you indeed find yourselves willing? You are willing in the day of his power, Ps. 110. 3. This is the day of his power upon your hearts. Many are called and refuse; he often stretches out his hands, and no man regards, Prov. 1. 24. Perhaps you have been called upon often before this day to do this same thing, and neglected it, had no heart to it; and he might have said to you, "Now will I never treat with you more; if you should call, I will not hear; if you stretch out your hands, I will not regard it, but laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear cometh." But if now he is pleased to call once more, your hearts do answer; "Lord, here we are, we are now ready to surrender ourselves;" you may conclude he hath poured out his Spirit upon you. The Spirit of the Lord is now moving upon this assembly, this is indeed a joyful day, the day which he hath himself made, and you ought to rejoice and be glad in it, Ps. 118. When the people in David's days offered of their substance to God for the service

of his house, it is said, The people rejoiced for that they offered willingly: (1 Chron. 29. 9.) and David, we are told, blessed God before all the congregation—saying, Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power—But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. If you are this day willing to offer yourselves, how much is this a greater thing! and it comes of him, and it is of his own you are now giving him; for he had a most unquestionable right in you before.

10. You should do it with solemnity. For, have you ever had a business of greater importance to transact in all your days? If you were to dispose of an estate, or a child, would you not have all things be as express, and clear, as may be? and would not they insist to have it so, with whom you deal in any such affair? And is there not a solemnity belonging to all such transactions? especially if you were to dispose of yourself; as in the conjugal covenant? though that is to be but for this short uncertain time of life; so as that the relation you enter into to-day, may be by death dissolved and broken off again to-morrow: how much more explicit, clear, and solemn, should this your covenanting with God in Christ be, wherein you are to make over your soul to him, and for eternity? You are to become his, under the bond of an everlasting covenant. You are entering a relation never to be broken off. This God is to be your God for ever and ever, and upon the same terms you are to be his. Is your immortal soul of less account with you than the temporal concernments of a mortal child, that you are placing out but for a term of years that soon expires? yea or than a piece of ground, or a horse, or a sheep, about which how punctual and express are your bargains and contracts wont to be? Or are only the matters of your soul, and wherein you have to do with the great God, to be slightly managed, or to be huddled up in confusion, or to be slid over in silent intimations? It is true, that so express and solemn dealing in yielding and giving up yourselves to God, is not needful on his part, who understands sincerity without any expression of yours; but it is needful on your part, that a deep and lasting impression may be made upon your spirits; which if you be sincere, you will not only feel yourselves to need, but your own temper and inclination will prompt you to it; accounting you can never be under bonds strong and sure enough to him. You will not only apprehend necessity, but will relish and taste pleasure in any such transaction with the

blessed God, in avouching him to be your God, and yourself to be his. The more solemn it is, the more grateful it will be to you.

Do so then. Fall before his throne; prostrate yourself at his footstool; and having chosen your fit season, when nothing may interrupt you; and having shut up yourself with him, pour out your soul to him; tell him you are now come on purpose, to offer yourselves to him as his own. O that you would not let this night pass without doing so! Tell him you have too long neglected him, and forgotten to whom you belonged; humbly beseech him for his pardon, and that he will now accept of you, for your Redeemer's sake, as being through his grace resolved never to live so great a stranger to him, or be such a wanderer from him more. And when you have done so, remember the time; let it be with you a noted memorable day, as you would be sure to keep the day in memory when you became such a one's servant or tenant, or your marriage-day. Renew this your agreement with God often, but forget it never. Perhaps some may say, "But what needs all this?" were we not once devoted and given up to God in baptism? and is not that sufficient? To what purpose should we do again a thing that hath once been so solemnly done?

But here I desire you to consider, Are you never to become the Lord's by your own choice? Are you always to be Christians, only by another's christianity, not by your own? And again, Have you not broken your baptismal vow? have you not forgot it for the most part ever since? I am afraid too many never think of any such matter at all, that ever they were devoted to God by others, but only upon such an occasion as this, to make it an excuse that they may never do such a thing themselves. And consider, were these Christian Romans on whom the apostle presses this duty never baptized, think you? Read over the foregoing part of the chapter, wherein you find him putting them in mind that they had been baptized into Christ's death, and buried with him in baptism, and that therefore this was to be an argument to them why they should yield themselves to God; not why they should not. Wherefore our way is now plain and open to what we have further to do, namely,

II. To apply this practical doctrine, and press the precept further upon you, which hath been opened to you, and pressed by parts in some measure already, in our insisting on the several heads, which you have seen do belong to it; and are one way or other comprehended in it. Which will therefore

make this latter part of our work the shorter, and capable of being dispatched in the fewer words; and with blessed effect, if the Spirit of the living God shall vouchsafe to co-operate, and deal with your hearts and mine. Shall we then all agree upon this thing? Shall we unite in one resolution, "We will be the Lord's." Shall every one say in his own heart, "For my part, I will, and so will I, and so will I?" Come now, one and all. This is no unlawful confederacy, it is a blessed combination! Come then, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, not to be forgotten, Jer. 50. 5. With whatsoever after-solemnity you may renew this obligation and bond of God upon your souls, as I hope you will do it, every one apart, in your closets, or in any corner, and you cannot do it too fully, or too often; yet let us now all resolve the thing; and this assembly make a joint-surrender, and oblation of itself to the great God our sovereign rightful Lord, through our blessed Redeemer and Mediator, by the eternal Spirit, (which I hope is breathing and at work among us,) as one living sacrifice, as all of us, alive from the dead, to be for ever sacred to him! O blessed assembly! O happy act and deed! With how grateful and well-pleasing an odour will the kindness and dutifulness of this offering ascend, and be received above! God will accept, heaven will rejoice, angels will concur, and gladly fall in with us. We hereby adjoin ourselves in relation, and in heart and spirit, "to the general assembly, to the church of the first-born ones written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," and within a little while shall be actually among them. Is it possible there should be now among us any dissenting vote? Consider,

1. It is a plain and unquestionable thing you are pressed unto: a thing that admits of no dispute, and against which you have nothing to say, and about which you cannot but be already convinced. And it is a matter full of danger, and upon which tremendous consequences depend, to go on in any practice, or in any neglect, against a conviction of judgment and conscience. For your own heart and conscience must condemn you if you consider, and it betrays you if you consider not. How fearful a thing is it for a man to carry his own doom in his own bosom! to go up and down the world with a self-condemning heart, if it be awake, and which if it be not, yet cannot sleep always, and must awake with the greater terror at length. And in so plain a case it is most cer-

tainly God's deputy, and speaks his mind; If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, &c. 1 John 3. 20.

2. It is that therefore the refusal whereof none of you would avow. Who among us can have the confidence to stand forth and say, I will be none of the Lord's? Would any man be content to go with this written upon his forehead from day to day? And doth not that signify such a refusal to be a shameful thing? That must needs be an ill temper of mind which one would be ashamed any one should know.

3. And it is a mean thing to dissemble, to be willing to be thought, and counted what we are not, or to do what in truth we do not.

4. And considering what inspection we are under, it is a vain thing. For do we not know that "eyes which are as a flame of fire," behold us, and pierce into our very souls? Do we not know "all things in us are naked and manifest to him with whom we have to do?" (Heb. 4. 12.) and that he discerns it, if there be any heart among us that is not sincere in this thing?

5. Consider that this is the very design of the gospel you live under. What doth it signify or intend, but to recal apostate creatures back again to God? What is the Christian religion you profess, but a state of devotedness to God, under the conduct and through the mediation of Christ? You frustrate the gospel, and make your religion a nullity and an empty name, till you do this.

6. And how will you lift up your heads at last in the great day? and before this God the Judge of all? You cannot now plead ignorance. If perhaps any among you have not been formerly so expressly called, and urged to this yielding yourselves to God; now you are: and from his own plain word it is charged upon you. Will not this be remembered hereafter? What will you say when the great God whose creature you are, speaks to you with the voice of thunder, and bids you gird up your loins, and give him an answer? "Were you not on such a day, in such a place, demanded and claimed in my name? Were you not told, were you not convinced, you ought to yield yourselves to me? and yet you did it not. Are you prepared to contest with your Maker? Where is your right, where is your power, to stand against me in this contest?"

7. But if you sincerely yield yourselves, the main controversy is at end between the great God and you. All your former sins are pardoned and done away at once. Those glad tidings you have often heard that import nothing but "glory to

God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men," plainly shew that the Great God whom you had offended, hath no design to destroy you, but only to make you yield, and give him back his own. Though you have formerly lived a wandering life, and been as a vagabond on the earth from your true Owner, it will be all forgotten. How readily was the returning prodigal received! and so will you. How quiet rest will you have this night, when upon such terms there is a reconciliation between God and you! You have given him his own, and he is pleased, and most of all for this, that he hath you now to save you. You were his to destroy before, now you are his to save. He could easily destroy you against your will, but it is only with your will, he having made you willing, that he must save you. And his bidding you yield, implies his willingness to do so. O how much of gospel is there in this invitation to you to yield yourselves to God! consider it as the voice of grace. Will he that bids a poor wretch yield itself, reject or destroy when it doth so?

8. And how happily may you now live the rest of your days in this world. You will live under his care, for will he not take care of his own, those that are of his own house? An infidel would. You are now of his family, under his immediate government, and under his continual blessing. And were you now to give an account where you have been to-day, and what you have been doing: if you say, you have been engaged this day in a solemn treaty with the Lord of heaven and earth, about yielding yourselves to him; and it be further asked, "Well, and what was the issue? Have you agreed?" Must you, any of you, be obliged by the truth of the case to say, "No;" astonishing answer! What! hast thou been treating with the great God, the God of thy life, and not agreed? What, man! did he demand of thee any unreasonable thing? "Only to yield myself." Why that was in all the world the most reasonable thing. Wretched creature, whither now wilt thou go? What wilt thou do with thyself? Where wilt thou lay thy hated head? But if you can say, "Blessed be God, I gladly agreed to the proposal: He gave me the grace not to deny him:" then may it be said this was a good day's work, and you will have cause to bless God for this day as long as you have a day to live.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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